THE THEORETICAL CONTEXTS OF MARY DALY'S THOUGHT

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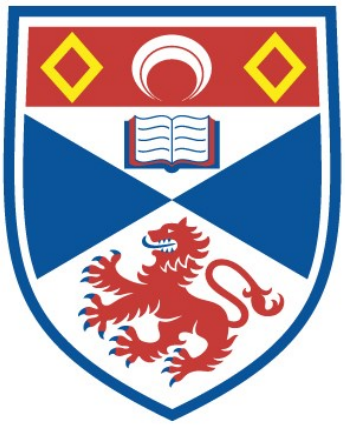
A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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Mary Daly's Thought

A thesis submitted for the degree

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by Sue Waslin

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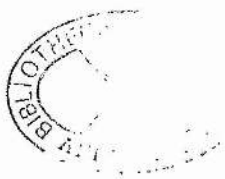

To the youngest members of the clan:

Lucie, Laura, Leonie and Mollie

- may your future be a bright one.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses upon the writings of the contemporary North American feminist theologian Mary Daly. It takes the form of a critical study of Daly's thought in terms of five tributary influences. It represents a contribution to two areas of research: the history of feminist ideas, and the ongoing methodological debate within feminism as to the possible relationship between feminist theory and 'conventional' theory.

In chapter one Daly's political thought is introduced through a discussion of the influence of the tradition of radical feminism. The principle aim of this chapter is to clarify, as far as possible, the dual process of influence that exists between her thinking and the work of certain radical feminist theorists.

In chapter two the influence of Beauvoirian existentialism upon Daly's thought is examined in the wake of the claim that in drawing from Simone de Beauvoir's feminist existentialist analysis of women's situation, in The Second Sex, Daly assimilates Sartrean existentialist assumptions which are problematic from a feminist perspective.

In chapter three turn to address Daly's philosophical- theological debt to Thomas Aquinas and the Thomist tradition. I trace the history of Daly's dealings with Thomism, including her criticism, and briefly evaluate her continued feminist engagement with its ontology.

In chapter four Daly's utilisation of Peter L. Berger's sociological theory is explored. I discuss Daly's feminist criticism of Berger's theory of 'worldbuilding' and proceed to evaluate her subsequent attempts to use Berger's work as the starting-point for a new feminist sociology of knowledge.

In the fifth and final chapter the abiding influence of Christianity to Daly's 'revolutionary' theological agenda is highlighted and explored with reference to the contemporary division of theological labour between so-called 'reformists' and 'revolutionaries'.

The thesis ends with a few concluding remarks about Daly's methodology with regard to 'conventional' theory.

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Introduction

This thesis represents an encounter with the work of Mary Daly on the part of a student of feminist theology. It takes the form of a critical study of the relationship between Daly's feminist theory and five major theoretical frameworks.[1] Daly is radically eclectic, drawing upon an assortment of sociological, philosophical, political and theological sources in her effort to create a philosophy/theology of liberation. As Marsha Hewitt has noted: 'Despite theflamboyant and intensely metaphoric language Daly uses in her later work, her underlying philosophical theory is steeped in the Western intellectual tradition in which she was formed'.[2]

In this thesis I have elected to discuss Daly's intellectual debts to radical feminist theory, Simone de Beauvoir's existentialist feminism, Thomas Aquinas and the Thomist tradition, Peter L. Berger's sociology of knowledge and Christian theology.One could equally well put a case for exploring the influence upon Daly's thought of a number of otherintellectual frameworks. Research has already been carried out on the importance to Daly's theory of Paul Tillich's theology[3], Herbert Marcuse's critical theory[4] and R. D. Laing's existential psychiatry.[5] Even this list is not exhaustive. One could also analyse the influence upon Daly of, for example, the philosophy of Nietzsche, the Process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, the liberation philosophy of Paolo Freire, ecofeminism or the linguistic philosophy of Suzanne Langer. My decision to explore the five

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1 I employ the term 'theory' throughout the thesis in the general practical sense of a set of ideas that both attempt to explain the world (through stretching the imagination, making generalisations about individual experiences etc.) and sometimes also to envision ways in which to transform it.

2 Hewitt, Marsha Aileen Critical Theory of Religion: A Feminist Analysis (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995) p.133.

3 See for example Mary A. Stenger 'A Critical Analysis of the Influence of Paul Tillich on Mary Daly's Feminist Theology' Encounter 43: pp. 219-239, Summer, 1982; and Laurel C. Sneider 'From New Being to Meta-Being: A Critical Analysis of Paul Tillich's Influence on Mary Daly' Soundings 75, no. 2/3, (summer, 1992).

4 See the chapter entitled 'Herbert Marcuse, Mary Daly, and Gynocentric Feminism' in Hewitt, op. cit., pp. 113-45.

5 Meyer-Wilmes, Hedwig 'About the Schizophrenia in Women's Beings: A Re-Reading of Mary Daly' Feminist Theology: the Journal of the Britain and Ireland School of Feminist Theology No. 6 (May, 1994), pp.647-81.

discourses indicated owes partly to the paucity of research into their respective impact upon Daly's theorising, and partly to my own personal interests.

The primary intention of my analysis is to *clarify* Daly's feminist theory and practice.[6] A clarification of Daly's methodology is important as a prolegomenon to a 'dialogic' evaluation of the extent and nature of her significance for contemporary feminist theology. I use the term 'dialogic' because I think that the value of what Daly has to say will only emerge through a feminist communal process of assessment which, whilst underway, is not yet complete. Moreover, the clarification of feminist theological perspectives in general is crucial to academic theology as a public discipline. As the North American theologian Sallie McFague notes: it is only when each theologian strives 'to identify as clearly as possible the perspective from which she or he reflects, the tradition out of which he or she comes, and the sensibility which prompts one chosen perspective rather than another' that a 'conversation with other perspectives' can proceed and 'inadequacies, limitations, and possible errors' in one's own position be mitigated.[7] In particular the thesis is presented as a contribution to two areas of research.

Firstly, it is a study of Daly's feminist theology, a research into work now regarded as one of the 'classic' products of second-wave feminist theology[8] (in a manner analogous to the study of the writings of Simone de Beauvoir by feminist philosophers and Virginia Woolf by feminist literary critics).[9] This is not simply to yield to the present 'star' system in feminism. Daly played a major role

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6 I employ the term feminist theory to mean a collectivity of theories that may diverge radically from each other on questions of the sex-gender distinction, of the nature of oppression and of strategies for liberation. It is still useful to bring these theories under a common umbrella for a number of reasons, although continued reflection on what it means to think 'as a feminist' is imperative.

7 McFague, Sallie Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), p.x.

8 That feminist theory has now moved beyond criticism of the conventional classics to a critical position regarding its own 'classics' is a measure of how critically self-reflexive it has become in a relatively short period of time.

9 Feminist philosophical literature on Beauvoir is now extensive: see for example Toril Moi Feminist Theory and Simone de Beauvoir (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990); and Mary Evans Simone de Beauvoir: a Feminist Mandarin (London: Tavistock, 1985). The literature on Woolf has become equally prodigious: see for example Elaine Showalter A Literature of Their Own: British Women Writers from Brontë to Lessing (London: Virago, 1978); and Jane Marcus (ed.) New Feminist Essays on Virginia Woolf (London: Macmillan, 1981).

in the birthing-process of contemporary feminist theology in the 1960s and 1970s. Since the publication of Gyn/Ecology: the Metaethics of Radical Feminism[10] (1978) Daly has paid little heed to the formal and material conventions of contemporary theological scholarship. Yet this book and those subsequent to it - Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy[11] (1984), Websters' First New Intergalactic Wickedary of the English Language[12] (1989) and Outercourse: The Be-Dazzling Voyage[13] - may still be read profitably as works of theology. It may be that Daly's preoccupation with creating an alternative format for feminist theology represents a challenge to the received orthodoxies of established scholarship. One aspect of the training of a theologian is learning to reproduce an accepted theological 'style' (though this may vary according to which subdiscipline of theology - fundamental, practical or systematic - one is engaged in). What is deemed 'acceptable' by university and ecclesiastical authorities is partly a matter of tradition. Yet 'tradition' may veil power relations at work in the norms for 'appropriate' theological discourse. I submit that, whilst Daly makes no claim to be engaging in theology in the classic Christian sense of being a rational exposition of 'revealed' knowledge, it is still possible to read her work in terms of the formula of *fides quarens intellectum* in the sense that it is the product of a mind struggling to explore rationally a fundamental 'faith' or 'trust' in the deep sources of existence. In so far as this is true, the concept of theology as 'faith seeking understanding' is an appropriate appellation for Daly's work.

A fundamental presupposition underlying the present work is that, in order to assess Daly's significance for contemporary feminist theology, an awareness of the complex ideological background from which she draws is crucial. It is, of course, a commonplace that theologies and philosophies do not emerge mysteriously from vacuums, but are spatio-temporally located and conditioned. No system of thought can be properly understood until it is viewed in the light both of its historical *Sitz im Leben* and in the light of its connection with other intellectual systems. This proposition applies to any author. How can one understand adequately the thought of Augustine

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10 Daly, Mary Gyn/Ecology: the Metaethics of Radical Feminism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978). Subsequent references will be to the fifth British edition (London: The Women's Press, 1991).

11 Daly, Mary Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy (London: The Women's Press, 1984).

12 Daly, Mary Websters' First New Intergalactic Wickedary of the English Language (Conjured by Mary Daly in Cahoots with Jane Caputi) (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987). Subsequent references will be made to the to the English edition (London: The Women's Press, 1988).

13 Daly, Mary Outercourse: The Be-Dazzling Voyage. Containing Recollections from My Logbook of a Radical Feminist Philosopher (Be-ing an Account of My Time/Space Travels and Ideas - Then, Again, Now and How) (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1993).

and what induced him to take up the positions he did, unless one is also aware of the impact upon him of the thought of Plato and Plotinus and the *gnwsiß* of Mani? How can one understand why Barth launched the 'bombshell' of his commentary on 'The Epistle to the Romans' into 'the playground of the theologians' unless one knows something of the course of nineteenth century liberal Protestantism and of the historical importance of the Great War? And so it is with all theologians - including Daly - whose writings cannot be comprehended adequately unless one knows something of both the socio-historical context and the discourses that inform her thinking. This said, it may well be that Daly does not owe as much as has been thought to certain intellectual frameworks. In which case my analysis will take issue with one or another interpretation of Daly's work that seeks to prove the existence of a theoretical debt that does not exist (or else is not as extensive, nor as problematic, as one might at first think). In my examination of Daly's debt to de Beauvoir's existentialist feminism I shall argue, contra one Dalyian scholar, that Daly does not assimilate de Beauvoir's (Sartrean) existentialist ontology and that therefore her work does not fall prey to the problems that such an ontology brings for feminists.

A second, albeit subsidiary, aim of this thesis is to contribute to the developing debate regarding feminist methodology with respect to feminist use of male-authored and/or purportedly 'male-stream' theory, that is, theory that mirrors male desires, objectives and activities whilst veering away from the concerns and practices of women.[14] Carole Pateman articulates the central issue in this debate in the question: '[W]hat is, and should be, the relationship of feminist theorists to the classics and to conventional theoretical methods?'[15] The importance of the debate regarding the propriety and efficacy of feminist use of male-stream theory attaches to the ongoing necessity for feminists to be critically aware of the sources of their theories. It has been argued both by Daly and, more recently, by Betty Friedan that Anglo-American feminist theory - out of which both Daly's writing and this thesis emerge - has now entered 'a second theoretical stage' (Friedan), one that arises out of a changed socio-political context in which different questions and problems have emerged to those which preoccupied the early second-wave feminists (including Friedan herself). Friedan alludes to a kind of gap that exists between women such as Daly and a younger generation of women, a gap that is measured not temporally but discursively. (There is, for example, a far

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14 The term 'male-stream' is taken from Mary O'Brien, The Politics of Reproduction (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981) p.5.

15 Pateman, Carole 'Introduction: The Theoretical Subversiveness of Feminism' in Pateman and Elizabeth Gross (eds.) Feminist Challenges : Social and Political Theory (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987; originally published in Australia by Allen & Unwin Australia, 1986) p.3.

greater awareness of difference now than when Daly first began to write).The second theoretical stage is characterised by the recognition that the purely critical phase of feminist theorising has receded before the demands of re-construction.[16] It is undoubtedly the case, as Friedan says, that feminist criticism has matured over the last thirty years. However, it is important to be mindful of the ongoing necessity for feminist criticism. If feminism is to continue to function as a political movement which is subversive and marginal to the dominant social order, then the feminist community needs to constantly hone the skills of criticism and self-reflexivity. The point is articulated by Toril Moi, who counsels that feminists have 'to be very much more aware than the ruling powers of what we're doing, simply in order to avoid, as far as possible, trapping ourselves in the traditional power structures'.[17] Thus, whilst the imperative to create a worldview consonant with feminist convictions has now come to the fore (a practice that is encapsulated in Daly's exhortation to women to 'Name' their sense of themselves, the world and 'God') such an envisioning must be continually chastened by unceasing effort to expose patriarchal values wherever and whenever they surface. As well as investigating the substantive textual connections between Daly's thought and the five selected discourses, then, I shall reflect upon this practice, where appropriate,[18] in terms of the relation between feminism and male-stream theory.

A useful classification of possible feminist approaches to male-stream theory is provided by Moira Gatens in her paper 'Feminism, Philosophy and Riddles without Answers'[19]. Gatens isolates three distinct approaches: firstly, theoretical separatism which relinquishes or simply ignores all male-authored theory; secondly, a project of extension which seeks to include women in pre-existent theoretical paradigms; and thirdly, an approach that recognises the bias of male theory and which seeks to challenge and subvert it in certain ways. I shall briefly describe each of these approaches in turn before commenting on Daly's practice.

Feminist advocates of the first approach, that of theoretical separatism, wish to question the theoretical wisdom of drawing from male-authored texts and traditions in any way whatsoever. This is not a widely held stance, though it does possess legitimacy in some radical feminists circles, most particularly in the lesbian separatist movement. Gatens holds up the work of Valerie Solanas - the

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16 Lilburne, Geoffrey R. 'Christology: In Dialogue with Feminism'Horizons 11 (spring, 1984), pps.7-27.

17 Moi, Toril Feminist Theory and Simone de Beauvoir (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990) p.95.

18 This does not apply to my treatment of radical feminism, which originated as a critique of political theory *qua* androcentric theory. See chapter five of this thesis.

19 Gatens, Moira 'Feminism, Philosophy and Riddles without Answers' in Pateman and Gross, op. cit., pp.13-29. Gatens analysis is confined to philosophy. Here I extend her classification to theory in general..

author of the notorious S.C.U.M. Manifesto - as representative of one strand of this approach. Implicit in Solanas' rejection of male theory is the notion that theory *per se* is intrinsically and inevitably masculinist, and that feminism is not so much a form of theory as unadulterated praxis. Solanas' advocacy of some kind of unsullied practice (whatever that may mean) does not challenge directly the processes by which patriarchal texts are generated and constructed in the first place. This is seen by Gatens to be a serious methodological limitation. Gatens' suspicions about theoretical separatism centre upon what she perceives as its utopianism. Specifically, she believes that this agenda 'runs the serious risk of reproducing, elsewhere, the very relations which it seeks to leave behind'.[20] In other words, the theoretical separatist may be prone to unconsciously reinscribing patriarchal values into their praxis even whilst consciously committed to their eradication.

The second feminist approach to theory, that of extension, views only the *content* and not the general framework of traditional theory to be the main problem. Theory is not necessarily oppressive in and of itself (as Solanas thinks). Indeed it is basically sex-neutral. There are thus no inherent methodological barriers to overcome. The task of feminist thinkers is duly understood as a process of filling the lacunae in theory caused by the omission of women, thereby correcting the bias. This basically amounts to extending frameworks so as to include women. By doing this it is hoped that an androcentric theory will become representative of all human beings. Gatens cites as examples of such an approach Mary Wollstonecraft's appropriation of the discourse of egalitarianism and Simone de Beauvoir's application of Sartrean existentialism. Gatens argument with respect to the second approach is simply that it is an illusion to think of any theoretical framework as sex-neutral. She writes: 'Feminists who have attempted to extend or alter the content of these philosophies have done more than add up and "tidy up". They have also, often, modified the framework of the philosophy they employ, though in a way that is not always readily visible'.[21] In an illustration of her point Gatens shows how Sartre later took up Beauvoir's idea of woman as being perceived and perceiving herself as an object, an idea that represented an important modification of Sartre's account of 'human' subjectivity in Being and Nothingness wherein the other is always for themselves a subject.[22] Beauvoir does not then simply apply Sartre's conceptual grid to the situation of women, as is often supposed, but rather amends it in certain respects so that it is able to account for women's experiences.

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20 Gatens in Pateman and Gross, op. cit., p.16.

21 Ibid., p.22.

22 Ibid., pp.21-22.

The third and final type of relation between feminism and theory listed by Gatens is not unlike theoretical separatism in as much as theory is not perceived as neutral, nor is the problem of theory for feminists simply a matter of content or subject-matter. This approach differs from theoretical separatism, however, in its response to the problem. As we have seen, some feminists who advocate theoretical separatism hold that theory itself should be dropped or ignored because it is an irrevocably 'male' pursuit, women's interests being oriented to more pragmatic horizons. Feminists who advocate the third approach argue, however, that theoretical traditions must be faced and challenged. Thus Gatens (who includes her own work under this rubric) writes:

> By *self-consciously* demonstrating that any philosophical paradigm is *not* neutral, these feminists make themselves, both as philosophers and as women, *visible* . By making themselves visible, they in turn throw into question the legitimacy of claims and assumptions in philosophy that have been taken as axiomatic. In so far as this approach questions the very foundation and status of philosophy it also reveals the investments and concerns of philosophy. It does this by demonstrating not only *what* is excluded from a particular philosophy but also *why* it is crucial, for the very existence of that philosophy, to exclude it.[23]

In other words, the process of structuring theory itself becomes the focus of feminist analysis. As Gatens realises, this approach gives us more information about male subjective, intellectual proclivities than about women. Nevertheless, such an emphasis may be necessary if women are to avoid falling into the same pitfalls that have beset male theorising.

Gatens classifies Daly as a theoretical separatist, though she distinguishes Daly's view (of philosophy) from that of Solanas. The group of which Daly is seen by Gatens to be representative is said to acknowledge that a relationship between feminism and theory *does* exist, but that 'it is historically, and necessarily, an oppressive one ... that philosophy [as an example of theory] is, necessarily, a masculine enterprise that owes its existence to the repression or exclusion of femininity and as such it is of no use to feminists or their projects'.[24] As Gatens argues, this attitude to philosophical theory is inadequate because it is predicated upon a reified conception of philosophy 'as a discipline or an activity' that 'coincides with its past', whereas in fact philosophy is 'a human activity that is ongoing'.[25] The same can be said, of course, with regard to other disciplines such as theology or sociology. In what follows no attempt will be made to use Gatens' typology as a Procrustean bed in which to try to 'fit' Daly's use of say, Peter Berger's sociology, but it will provide

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23 Ibid., p.25.

24 Ibid., p.15.

a useful point of reference for a discussion of Daly's practice. Let us turn now to the project at hand. Given the twin foci of my research what is the best way to approach Daly's writings?

The most appropriate method for arriving at an adequate understanding and assessment of Daly's thought is that of historical 'archaeology'. Here the philosophical and theological roots of categories, concepts and themes are painstakingly disentangled and analysed. Such a method is not itself immune to a certain arbitrariness. Mindful of this problem I shall nevertheless attempt to bring out certain lines of influence. Such an approach is not blind to the risk of forfeiting the organic unity of Daly's thought as it is given in her narratives. This is indeed a very real danger and one which must be continually borne in mind. An even greater hermeneutic calamity would ensue, however, should analysis fail to appreciate the sophistication and subtlety of Daly's synthesising activity.

The thesis is organised so as to reflect this archaeological methodology. Each chapter encapsulates a discrete strand within the body or 'text' of her life-work. The word 'text' - and its semantic relative 'textile' or cloth - is derived from the Latin term 'texere' which means 'to weave'. The metaphor of weaving and its associative tropes of spinning and quilting are all activities which have figured prominently in women's historical practices. These activities have been assigned great symbolic importance by many in the women's movement as metaphors for the multi-dimensional processes of creativity. The feminist sociologist Dorothy Smith, for example, sees the work of quilting as part of a 'submerged folk tradition of a true art sustained and perpetuated by women when the emergence of high art excluded them and surely excluded distinctively womanly materials'.[26] She explains:

> A quilt was made to be used. It was integrated into particularistic relations - the piece of her grandmother's dress, her daughter's pinafore - and was sometimes made by a group of women working together. The making itself and the friendships were built into the design, the collection of fabrics, the stitching. A quilt was not a piece of art, therefore, to be seen in isolation from its history and the social relations of its making. It was not made to be set in the high walls of a gallery or museum. It was always a moment in the moving skein of family and tradition, raising suspicion against time and its powers of separation.[27]

Another passage, from Adrienne Rich's poem 'Transcendental Études', illustrates the fertile uses to which the extended metaphor of text/weaving is often put by feminist theorists. Of women's attempts to reconstitute their lives Rich writes:

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25 Ibid.

26 Smith, Dorothy E. The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987) p.23.

Vision begins to happen in such a life as
if a woman quietly walked away
from the argument and jargon in a room
and sitting down in the kitchen, began turning in her lap
bits of yarn, calico and velvet scraps,
laying them out absently on the scrubbed boards
in the lamplight, with small rainbow-colored shells ...
Such a composition has nothing to do with eternity,
the striving for greatness, brilliance -
only with the musing of a mind
one with her body, experienced fingers quietly pushing
dark against bright, silk against roughness
pulling the tenets of a life together
with no mere will to mastery,
only care ...[28]

Such images of women's work provide an evocative portrayal of feminist scholarship as it seeks to knit new designs from threads of contemporary experience and other perhaps more ancient sources.

In application to the format of the present study the metaphor of 'text' retains many of these semantic nuances. My purpose here is not to dissect Daly's work; rather do I speak of strands which, taken together, form a particular pattern, a living intertextual design. Each thread is given its own chapter. Each is distinguishable from the others, possessing its own vitality, its own 'texture', 'shape' and 'colour'. Yet each is simultaneously interdependent with the rest so that during the course of the narrative each thread invariably crosses over others, becoming intertwined with different strands. Ontological questions, for instance, are in no sense separate or separable from the socio-linguistic, spiritual and political discussions to which they give rise. Rather are all of these strands interwoven in a complex tapestry of reciprocal influences.

In the chapter one the reader is introduced to Daly's political thought through an analysis of her interaction with 'radical feminism'. Daly identifies herself as 'Radical Feminist' and her work has been received as such by other feminists both within and outside that theoretical orbit. The aim of

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27 Ibid.

28 Rich, Adrienne 'Transcendental Études' in The Fact of a Doorframe: Poems Selected and New 1950-84 (N.Y.: W.W. Norton, 1984) pp. 268-69. See also the meditation upon the creativity of the spider in 'Natural Resources' in the same anthology, p.261.

the chapter is firstly to 'place' Daly within the theoretical corpus of radical feminist theory. This is important in as much as radical feminism is a more diverse movement of thought than is often realised. I shall show that Daly commits herself to the central 'signature' features of an already extant body of radical feminist theory during the early 1970s. One such feature of early radical feminism is a suspicion of 'male-engendered' political theory. In this respect the present chapter provides the political philosophical criteria that govern Daly's dealings with 'male-engendered' theories in general, an issue that is discussed in each of the following chapters. In tracing Daly's utilisation of each of these features of radical feminist discourse I shall argue that her principle contribution to the radical feminist corpus lies in her unremitting focus upon social knowledges and their transmission through the sphere of culture. The analytic emphasis upon 'culture' has attracted criticism from some feminists who argue that in downplaying the economic and 'material' realities of oppression she falls into a dangerous idealism. I shall defend Daly in the face of such criticisms by calling attention to two things: firstly, her aims in emphasising the sphere of culture, and secondly, the political desirability of a division of theoretical labour in the feminist community.

Chapter two is entitled 'Existentialism', though I shall focus upon the relationship between Daly's feminist thought and a particular form of the philosophy, namely, the feminist existentialism of Simone de Beauvoir as it is given formulation in The Second Sex.[29] Only one study has been published to date of de Beauvoir's influence upon Daly's writings (and I shall take issue with the interpretation of Daly's work given therein).[30] I shall argue that Daly draws principally upon de Beauvoir's empirical analysis of female oppression, rather than upon the existentialist philosophical apparatus. I shall challenge the view of one feminist scholar who has recently alleged that in her appropriation of ideas in The Second Sex Daly becomes involved in perpetuating certain 'masculinist' assumptions that permeate the de Beauvoir's existentialist feminist philosophy. In recent years some feminists have criticised de Beauvoir for replicating Sartre's dualistic

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29 Beauvoir, Simone de The Second Sex translated and edited by H.M. Parshley. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1972; originally published in France as *Le Deuxieme Sexe* : *Librairie Gallimard*, 1949). The Second Sex is generally considered to be a work of feminist theory in spite of the fact that Beauvoir rejected 'feminist' as a self-identification until 1972. See Anne Whitmarsh Simone de Beauvoir and The Limits of Commitment [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981] pp. 154f; and Reneé Winegarten Simone de Beauvoir: A Critical View [Oxford: Berg, 1988] pp. 92ff.

30 Korte, Anne-Marie *Een Pasie voor transcendentie: Feministe theologie en moderniteit in her denke van Mary Daly* (English abstract).

understanding of reality and his conflict-view of the self-other relation.[31] The question is whether these weaknesses in de Beauvoir's analysis may also have carried through to Daly's work. In response to this suggestion I shall demonstrate that, whilst Daly draws extensively from de Beauvoir's criticism of religion and her analysis of femininity, she does not thereby enter surreptitiously into Satrean 'precommitments'; rather to the contrary, in her later writing she is critical of de Beauvoir's 'patriarchal' existentialist assumptions. An analysis of each writer's view of woman/women and her/our oppression suggests that the origins of Daly's feminist philosophical presuppositions are to be found in to her Roman Catholic background, specifically in her earlier assimilation of Thomist philosophy and theology.

In chapter three I focus in detail upon Daly's feminist engagement with Thomism.[32] Of the intellectual influences discernible in Daly's work, that of Thomism is perhaps one of the most long-lasting and profound. There are, however, no published studies of the relations between Daly's feminist thought and Aquinas and/or his followers. I shall argue that the attempt to formulate a 'revolutionary' feminist theology based on women's experience of the 'intuition of being' cannot be adequately understood without a prior appreciation of her negotiation of Thomistic ontology. I begin by tracing Daly's philosophical-theological background. Like other Catholic theologians formed in the years before the Second Vatican Council, Daly's education was conducted in a theological-philosophical atmosphere dominated by Aquinas' thought. Indeed she completed two doctorates on Thomistic questions at the University of Fribourg between 1960-65: The Problem of Speculative Theology: a Study in St. Thomas, and Natural Knowledge of God in the Philosophy of Jacques Maritain. Daly abandoned the Thomistic matrix between 1968-71 when she concluded Aquinas' work was the product and reflection of a male-stream culture. However, when faced with the problem of 'theology after the death of God the Father' she attempted a creative feminist re-engagement with certain elements in Thomistic thought, including the concept of 'the intuition of being'. Yet this attempt to reclaim the concept of the intuition of being is problematic in certain respects. The major question concerning Daly's retrieval of ideas, principally the concept of the intuition of being, is that in bringing the idea into play in a feminist theoretical context it either loses the intelligibility conferred upon it by its original Thomist conceptual framework (and thus the project of 'Plundering' is a sham) or else it brings along with it major elements of that framework,

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31 Hartsock, Nancy Money, Sex and Power (N.Y: Longmans, 1983);. p. 286; Whitmarsh Simone de Beauvoir and The Limits of Commitment (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) p.150.

32 Thomism is defined as the schools and systems of philosophy and theology which take the teachings of Thomas Aquinas as their authoritative source.

which may pose other problems given the 'masculinist' nature of the discourse. This anomaly I shall argue, remains unresolved in Daly's writings.

The fourth chapter is entitled 'Sociology'. Here the focus of my enquiry falls upon the relationship between Daly's feminist theory and a specific branch of sociological theory, namely, the sociology of knowledge of Peter L. Berger. The connections between Berger's sociology of knowledge and Daly's understanding of the operations of patriarchal society are striking. A primary objective of Daly's work has been to uncover the ways in which the system of male domination actually operates in society so as to oppress women. Ultimately this task involves discovering the rules and criteria that are used in the generation and codification of social 'knowledge', for it is by virtue of such 'knowledge' that social reality is structured such that men come to dominate and oppress women in their everyday world. This theoretical necessity makes Berger's sociological theory a natural resource. With respect to the question of the methodology of feminist appropriation of male-stream sources I shall argue that, although Daly exposes Berger's false universalism and male bias (disguised under the cloak of scholarly objectivity), her challenge does not result in any thoroughgoing *sociological* criticism of his constructs (such as 'world-building' or 'legitimation'). However Daly does succeed in bringing to light certain 'masculinist' presuppositions in Berger's theory. Moreover her highly creative feminist 'reversal' of Berger's 'reversal' goes some way to defining the possible shape and contours of a radical feminist sociology of knowledge.

The fifth and final chapter is called simply 'Christianity'. The critical edge of the chapter lies not in further reflection on the sexism of traditional religion, nor in identifying ways to 'purify' Christian theological discourse of its structural, ideological 'pollutants', but rather in the insistence on taking seriously Daly's constructive insights regarding a feminist theology that is oriented to a spiritual horizon transcending Christianity. Broadly, my argument is to the effect that the relation between Daly's revolutionary theology and the 'male-stream' Christian tradition is far more complex than is usually supposed. Essentially, her move towards other more metaphorical designations does not enable her totally to transcend her Christian heritage, as she would have her readers believe. There are strong indications to suggest that, whilst she has clearly moved out of the fiduciary (as well as the institutional) embrace of the Church, her thought remains committed to the fundamental 'rules' that govern Christian 'God-talk'. I shall show how both Daly's 'revolutionary' criticisms of Christianity as well as her attempts at theological construction are both predicated on a grammar of divinity (an understanding of God's absolute distinction from the world) that she inherited through the Christian tradition. In my discussion of this fact I shall argue that far from being regarded as a limitation, in feminist 'revolutionary' terms, Daly's continued dependence upon the structuring

realities of Christian theism represents an opportunity for renewed dialogue between women on both sides of the reformist/revolutionary divide.

The discourses treated here are huge. Needless to say each of the frameworks I have selected could be explored in greater depth and in a better way by 'specialists' in their respective disciplines. Inevitably, within the confines of a single chapter not every concept or insight that Daly 'plunders' from Berger's writings for use in the project of feminist reconstruction can be explored. But this is not necessary in as much as the present analysis is not intended as an inventory of conceptual 'survivals'. My purpose here is exploratory and clarificatory rather than definitive: I seek to open up new terrain and to suggest fields for further research. Moreover my aim is to incorporate the broad sweep of the development of her thought rather than one phase. Given such a scope it is relatively easy to hit upon certain features which do not receive an in-depth treatment here. Daly's theory of language is one example. The intricacies of her understanding and practice of language are important elements in any interpretation of her work. Moreover a clarification of the difference between her approach and that of other contemporary feminist theorists is much needed. I am thinking in particular of influential writers in the French tradition such as Julia Kristeva[33], Luce Irigaray,[34] Hélène Cixous[35] and Monique Wittig.[36] Through their plurality of linguistic approaches these women have pioneered the exposition and criticism of a Western 'masculine' or 'phallocratic' economy. Like Daly, each considers their 'writing' to connect issues of subjectivity with the concerns about power, social structure and meanings. Beyond this common focus upon language, however, there are considerable philosophical and political differences both among these women and between them as a group and Daly. Daly's feminist thought operates primarily, not from the traditions of Continental philosophy and psychoanalysis, but from a more pragmatically oriented Anglo-American intellectual tradition. A research into the differences between Daly and the French feminisms would also allow further clarification of Daly's position in the contemporary debates concerning modernity and postmodernity, a subject that currently occupies many in the (academic) feminist community. Whilst I shall touch upon certain aspects of her view of language here (notably

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33 Kristeva, Julia Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art (Oxford, 1980).

34 Irigaray, Luce Speculum of the Other Woman (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985). and This Sex Which is not One (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985).

35 Cixous, Hélène 'The Laugh of the Medusa' in Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (eds.) New French Feminisms (Brighton: Harvester, 1981; originally published in Amhert: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980).

36 Wittig, Monique Les Guérilleres translated from the French by David Le Vay (Boston: Beacon Press,

her view of language as the medium for the externalisation of subjective meanings) a comprehensive analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis.

To support my arguments in the thesis I have drawn upon all the six feminist books published to date by Daly, that is: The Church and the Second Sex, Beyond God the Father, Gyn/Ecology, Pure Lust, the Wickedary and Outercourse. I have also consulted many of the articles that have been published by Daly since 1965,[37] though many of these works are only marginally helpful in that frequently they contain material that later appears in her books (or vice versa, material that has already been published in one of her books). In chapter one, 'Thomism', I make reference and quote from two of her three doctoral theses, namely, The Problem of Speculative Theology: A Study in St. Thomas and Natural Knowledge of God in the Philosophy of Jacques Maritain.[38] The latter work is published in its entirety.[39] Access to the first thesis is limited; it is unavailable through inter-library services and is obtainable only in a condensed version published, in 1965, by the Thomist Press in Washington. Although it would have been more satisfactory for me to have analysed this thesis in its entirety, I do not believe that the research has been seriously hampered by having only the (forty seven page) abstract with which to work. A comprehensive list of the secondary literature on Daly's work that I have consulted, as well as the literature (both primary and secondary) on the theories that I examine, is given in the bibliography.

1985; originally published in London: P. Owen, 1971).

37 See the bibliography.

38 Daly's first Ph.D. was in Religion at St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana. SeeOutercourse p.50.

39 Natural knowledge of God in the Philosophy of Jacques Maritain (Rome: The Catholic Book Agency, 1966).

Chapter 1: Radical Feminism

Mary Daly's development as a feminist theorist has been marked by a creative engagement with a distinct body of radical feminist philosophical assumptions and political constructs. A two-way process of influence exists between Daly's thought and the tradition of radical feminism. On the one hand, her political understanding of the nature and dynamics of sexual oppression has been heavily influenced by the work of other radical feminist thinkers. On the other hand, she herself has made a significant contribution to the evolution of the radical feminist theoretical corpus. A key objective, in the present chapter, will be to elucidate the nature and extent of this dual process of influence.

This project is of interest from the perspective of the history of feminist ideas. 'Radical feminism' is often portrayed as a cohesive, unified field of theory discrete from the two other branches of feminist theory in Anglo-American feminism: 'liberal' feminism and 'socialist-Marxist' feminism.[1] However, the boundary lines between the different 'types' of feminist theory often gloss over profound similarities and shared concerns between feminists of different theoretical persuasions. Moreover, methodological and theoretical differences are common between those who identify (or who have been classified as) radical feminists. It is hoped that the attempt to 'place' Daly within the theoretical orbit of radical feminism will manifest the problematicity of such typologies.

A review of Daly's interaction with the tradition of radical feminist theory will also facilitate a discussion of the political criteria that govern her attitude to the theories described in the following chapters. For the critical approach to the intellectual products of Western 'male-stream' culture that has governed Daly's feminist writings since 1973 is in part determined by the radical feminist critique of political theory that emerged in the United States during the mid-to-late 1960s.

What then is radical feminism? Radical feminism is, like other strands of feminist theory, notoriously difficult to define. It is not a monolithic body of discourse, though some commentators, in an attempt to smooth over discursive differences for taxonomic purposes, would have us believe otherwise: Alison Jaggar's characterisation of radical feminism in her paper 'Political Philosophies of Women's Liberation' being a case in point.[2] Indeed, far from being a unified and consistent theoretical corpus, radical feminism encompasses an array of competing and often incompatible positions.

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[1] See, for example, Alison Jagger Feminist Politics and Human Nature (Brighton: Harvester, 1983).

[2] Jaggar, Alison 'Political Philosophies of Women's Liberation' in Feminism and Philosophy ed. Mary Vetterling-Braggin, Frederick A. Ellston and Jane English (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1985; first edition 1977), pp.12-15.

Let us take the issue of class as an example. Some commentators consider an indifference to the issue of class to be a hallmark of radical feminist discourse. Daly is often held up as a representative figure by proponents of this view of radical feminism because she is perceived to neglect 'class' as an issue that is integral to patriarchy's functioning. But Daly's apparent indifference to class as an important feminist political indicator is not shared by certain other radical feminists. For example, Charlotte Bunch highlights the importance of class as a factor in her radical feminist conceptualisation of oppression.[3] Not all radical feminists hold the same view of the relative importance of class in understanding women's social situation; certainly not all radical feminists disregard it in constructing their theories. A second example concerns the oft-mooted radical feminist idealisation of reproduction. On this issue Jaggar writes definitively:

> The radical feminist claims that the roots of women's oppression are biological. She believes that the origin of women's subjection lies in the fact that, as a result of the weakness caused by childbearing, we became dependent on men for physical survival. Thus she speaks of the origin of the family in apparently conservative terms as being primarily a biological rather than a social or economic organization.[4]

This kind of generality is unhelpful and simply inaccurate as a description of certain radical feminists' positions: Daly, for one, does not conceive of the origins of women's oppression in naively biological terms, but rather in terms of a fundamental bifurcation or split in consciousness.

The point that I wish to make by citing this example is that radical feminist theory is not characterised by anything like discursive uniformity or even 'uni-praxis'. As the lesbian feminist philosopher Julia Penelope points out there are 'at least seven or eight ideologically distinct factions'[5] co-existing under the umbrella of radical feminism. This heterogeneity is partly accounted for by the influence of several tributary streams that have flowed into radical feminism since its inception: such as socialism-Marxism in the mid-to-late sixties, lesbian theory in the seventies, and ecofeminism in the eighties.

Any effort to define radical feminism, then, can only hope to identify certain common critical *topoi* which, generally speaking, are characteristic of radical feminism. What are these *topoi*? Theorists operating from a radical feminist approach do not view the basis of women's oppression to lie, as in the 'liberal' approach, in a lack of legal and political 'rights'; or, as in the

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3 See Bunch, Charlotte Passionate Politics, Essays 1968-1986. Feminist Theory in Action (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1987).

4 Jaggar in Vetterling-Braggin et. al, op. cit., p.12.

5 Penelope, Julia Call Me Lesbian: Lesbian Lives, Lesbian Theory (Freedom, California: The Crossing Press, 1992), p.138.

socialist-Marxist approach, in the institution of private property and class oppression.[6] A 'signature' feature of the 'radical' approach is said to be the belief that the oppression of women is the oldest and most fundamental form of oppression, a system of exploitation which serves as the paradigm for all other forms, including oppression by virtue of race, class or sexuality. Radical feminists are convinced that the other major alternatives in the Anglo-American tradition fail to acknowledge and theorise the nature and pervasiveness of male power. Radical feminists have as a result sought to reconceptualise the nature of male power which they see as transcending the 'public' sphere of conventional political activity and embracing the 'private' world of 'personal' relations, the family and sexuality.

In what follows I shall begin by attempting to map out five theoretical *topoi* or commonplaces of Daly's radical feminism through a brief history of her intellectual relationship with the nascent radical feminist theory of the 1960s and early 1970s. These *topoi* are: first, the criticism of conventional political theory; secondly, consciousness-raising as the privileged method of analysing women's experience; thirdly, the postulation of'women's experience' as a unified political category; fourthly, separatism as a strategy for women's liberation; and, finally, lesbianism as a conduit for new value. Such an approach will enable me to bring out the way in which, in some areas, Daly's contribution represents a consolidation of extant presuppositions, ideas and research, and the way in which, in other areas, her contribution has perhaps been of a more original and formative nature.

Let me begin by discussing the first 'signature' feature of radical feminism, namely the suspicion of male-engendered theoretical frameworks. In order to set this in context it is necessary to say a few words about the origins of radical feminism. Radical feminism came into existence in the United States during the 1960s. The impetus for its emergence was the disillusionment of some women active in radical political movements such as the movement for Civil Rights, pacifist campaigns, the New Left and student movements with conventional political methods.[7] These women began to reflect upon the fact that membership of radical political organisations did not protect them from being perceived by the men in the group through the haze of the 'feminine mystique' (Betty Friedan). In such organisations women tended to be assigned to the roles of

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6 Broadly speaking socialist feminism view women's oppression in and through the complex interconnections between class, race and sex/gender. Their analyses is therefore more nuanced than traditional Marxist analysis which tends to confine itself to the related categories of property-relations and economic class. Like the Marxist feminism, however, the socialist feminist maintain that the destruction of the capitalist economy holds the key to female liberation.

7 For a more detailed account of the emergence of radical feminist movement see Judith Hole and Ellen Levine The Rebirth of Feminism (New York: Quadrangle, 1971) and Maren Lockwood Carden The New Feminist Movement (New York: Russell Sage, 1974).

secretary, housewife or sex object, servicing the political, domestic and sexual needs of male activists. They began to vocalise their experiences of alienation and unease about the 'second class' treatment they were receiving from their male 'comrades' in structures and political organisations ostensibly devoted to equality, peace and justice.[8] As early as 1964 women members of the Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee (S.N.C.C.) began to meet together to talk about their position. Ruby Doris Smith Robinson even presented a paper to an S.N.C.C. conference on the theme: 'The Position of Women in S.N.C.C.'. In February 1965, Anne Koedt wrote a speech entitled 'Women in the Radical Movement' in which she protested the treatment of women by men. In the same year Mary King and Casey Hayden, two members of the S.N.C.C., contrasted the egalitarian ideals of the protest movement with the continued adherence to rigid sex roles inside it.[9] They began to consider that 'theory', as it was then formulated, was blind to women's inferior social position in relation to males. In particular they came to think that prevailing political frameworks failed to acknowledge and theorise the nature and pervasiveness of male power as they experienced it.

When these women began to protest at their treatment by the men, and to argue for inclusion in decision-making procedures, they were met with silence, ridicule or contempt. Indeed, when women members of the Student Democratic Society demanded a plank for women's liberation at the annual conference they were pelted with tomatoes and thrown out of the convention. Why these apparently 'progressive,' 'radical' men were so hostile to women who voiced discontent at their treatment is not clear, though as the feminist historian Olive Banks has noted, at that time the New Left was heavily influenced by a 'macho' ethos that drew sustenance from male heroes in the black power movement and in the Cuban revolution.

The radical feminist 'movement' began in earnest in 1967 when a small group of women, including Jo Freeman and Shulamith Firestone, left the 'National Conference for New Politics' in Chicago in protest at the way in which women and their concerns were being treated by the men. These women formed the 'Westside group'. In October, 1967 Firestone moved to New York where, along with Pam Allen, she founded New York's first feminist group: 'Radical Feminists' (subsequently called the 'New York Radical Women'). As women networked similar groups spread rapidly to other major North American cities. In October, 1968 Ti-Grace Atkinson resigned from the

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[8] C.f.: Marge Piercy 'The Grand Coolee Dam' in Robin Morgan (ed.)Sisterhood is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement(N.Y.: Random House, 1970). This book also contains a collection of excerpts from some of the most important documents to emerge from the early radical feminist groups. See also Anne Koedt, Ellen Levine and Anita Rapone (eds.) Radical Feminism (N.Y.: Quadrangle, 1973), pps. 318-21.

presidency of the National Organisation of Women (N.O.W.) in protest at its hierarchical structure. Atkinson wanted greater participatory democracy in the organisation though there were also ideological differences (she thought for example that N.O.W.'s abortion policy was not radical enough). She went on to found a group known as 'The Feminists' which published a manifesto setting out many of the 'doctrines' of radical feminism. In the autumn of 1968 manifestos from other groups began to appear, many of which argued that women as a class must band together against men as a class. The 'New York Radical Feminists' was brought together in December 1969 by Firestone, Anne Koedt, Diane Crothers and Celestine Ware. This collective was the first to issue a declaration, 'The Redstockings Manifesto', that women's oppression is the result of psychological rather than simply economic factors.[10]

In the new groups women began to use their own experiences as the basis for generating political analyses of their own relations as a group with men as a group. A critique of conventional political theory progressively emerged. The ensuing analytic transformation was later summed up in the phrase: 'the personal is the political'.[11] Out of these groups there emerged a call for a theoretical shift in political theory in which of the field of 'politics' and the concept of 'power' were to be reconceptualised so as to position at centre-stage those 'private' aspects of women's experience such as domestic labour, familial structures and sexuality, that had been hitherto neglected. Central to traditional political philosophical models, ranging from liberalism to socialism and Marxism, was a division between the 'public' realm of employment, party politics and finance and the 'private' realm of the home and domesticity. It was the former that was identified as the sphere in which 'power' is generated and exercised. It was, moreover, a 'man's world'; women's experiences were seen as marginal to 'public' political discourse.It is difficult now to appreciate the radical shift in political conceptuality that the phrase 'the personal is the political' demanded.Yet never before in political theory had the power disequation between women and men been used as the central analytic category in theory-generation. The feminist critique of the structuration of conventional political theory along the lines of the 'public/private' dichotomy had a major impact upon the thinking ofhe early radical feminists. There ensued an explosion of radical feminist political analyses by individuals such as Kate Millet, Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt as well as by nascent radical feminist groups which reflected the new holistic approach.

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9 See Sara M. Evans Personal Politics: The Roots of the Women's Liberation Movement in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left (N.Y.: Vintage, 1980) pps. 98-99.

10 See 'The Redstockings Manifesto' inMorgan op. cit. p.533-36.

11 The slogan 'The personal is the political' was coined by Carol Hanisch. See 'The Personal is the Political' in The Radical Therapist ed. Jerome Agel (N.Y.: Ballantine Books, 1971), pp. 152-57, cited in Hester Eisenstein Contemporary Feminist Thought (London: Unwin, 1984) p.12.

Daly was living in Europe at the time when the first stirrings of discontent began to sound amongst politically active women in North America. She spent the years 1959-1966 teaching and undertaking doctoral research at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland, a world far removed from the political and cultural upheavals that characterised American life in the first half of the 1960s. She returned to the United States in September, 1966, after completing her doctoral work, arriving in Boston in time to take up her new teaching post in the Faculty of Theology at Boston College. For the next two years she immersed herself in teaching and writing. She had signed a contract to write a book on the subject of women and the Church in 1965 and, though most of the research and writing for the book was completed in Fribourg, she continued to work on the manuscript as and when her teaching timetable allowed. Doubtless her feminist convictions at this point would today be described as 'liberal' in as much as she viewed the basis of women's oppression to lie in a lack of legal and political 'rights'. In the book conceived during this phase,The Church and the Second Sex, she argued for an extension to women of the political rights and social and religious privileges accorded by men. Apart from attending a number of peace movement gatherings, however, she did not involve herself in any overtly political activities. Her primary concern during this period was not with the situation of women so much as the broad question of Church renewal in the aftermath of the second Vatican Council. Of the six articles published between 1966-1968, for example, only one was concerned explicitly with the oppression of women.[12]

Daly's shift away fromthe concern with equality to the more radical position being pioneered by the women's groups occurred at some point between 1968-70, in the aftermath of the publication of The Church and the Second Sex. In the winter of 1968 Daly was given a terminal contract by the authorities at Boston College. She interpreted the move as an expression of ecclesiastical disapproval about the book. After a vigorous campaign by students and others on her behalf, however, she was eventually granted promotion and tenure. The experience, she later recalls, transmuted her understanding of education.[13] More importantly, she writes: 'I began to understand more of the implications of the feminist insight that "the personal is the political". The interconnections among the structures of oppression in a patriarchal society and the destructive dynamics which these structures generate in their victims became more and more visible'.[14] Daly's altered perception manifested itself in greater political activism. She began to attend meetings of

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12 Daly, Mary 'Antifeminism in the Church' Information Documentation on the Conciliar Church, no. 68-44 (Rome/Geneva: IDO-C, 1968).
13 'Feminist Postchristian Introduction' The Church and the Second Sex p.13.
14 Ibid.

N.O.W. in Boston and Worcester, Massachusetts and became active in its task force on women and religion. Gradually her allegiance to the institutional Church was brought into question. She spent the period 1969-70 hard at work on a manuscript of a book about the uncertain future of Catholicism: the book was never published and in 1971 she finally left the Church.

The extent of the shift that had taken place in Daly's feminist consciousness is revealed in Beyond God the Father. The central thesis of the book is that women must somehow move beyond the confines of the 'patriarchal' mind-set. In setting out her position she reformulates the existing radical feminist suspicion of male-engendered theory in terms of 'methodolatry'.'Methodolatry'is predicated upon the (unconscious) desire to maintain the subject 'man' and his experience at the centre of the social world. In order to sustain this state of affairs, Daly argues, the parameters of ' male method' are set so as effectivelyto ignore or suppress data that may threaten the credibility of 'man's' central position. The tyranny of 'methodolatry' hinders new discoveries. As she writes:

> It prevents us from raising questions never asked before and from being illumined by ideas that do not fit into pre-established boxes and forms. The worshippers of Method have an effective way of handling data that does not fit into the respectable categories of questions and Answers. They simply classify it as non-data, thereby rendering it invisible.[15]

Conventional methods are thus seen by Daly to be severely limited and unable to help women to understand their plight, still less to remedy it. The methodologies of disciplines like philosophy, theology and sociology have allowed male scholars to gloss over women's experience. Women 'have screened out experience and responded only to the questions considered meaningful and licit within the boundaries of prevailing thought structures, which reflect sexist social structures'.[16] This approach has been reverenced and legitimated by all of the major cultural institutions. Indeed it has been accorded such a high status that it is described as one of the 'false gods' from which women must now liberate themselves.

The major issue here concerns the question of methodological 'space'. In Daly's view the starting-point of a 'method of liberation' is for women to refuse 'to limit our perspectives, questioning, and creativity to any of the preconceived patterns of male-dominated culture'.[17] Beyond God the Father is itself billed as 'an effort to begin asking nonquestions and to start discovering, reporting, and analyzing nondata'.[18] The autonomous female externalisation valorised by Daly will be deviant by (patriarchal) norms because it involves the transgression of orthodox methodological

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15 Beyond God the Father p.11

16 Ibid., p.7.

17 Ibid.

conventions. Indeed, she goes so far as to say that the ways in which women's 'self-birth' is occurring is and will remain 'nonspeech in the terms of our culture'.[19] Female self-actualisation will take forms that are unrecognisable according to traditional academic standards.

The commitment to 'methodicide'or the murder of 'male' methodis maintained throughout Daly's later writings. Thus she writes that, sinceGyn/Ecology 'confronts old molds/models of question-asking by being itself an Other way of thinking/speaking, it will be invisible to those who fetishize old questions - who drone that it does not "deal with" *their* questions'.[20] Likewise Pure Lust is promoted as a 'Work of Feminist Erraticism'[21], 'a Mistake'.[22] There is in Daly's work, then,a deliberate emphasis in her work upon waywardness, on wandering and deviation from the norm. Much of Daly represents a sustained reflection upon this divergence from 'conventional' theory, though in essence it sits squarely with the insights of the earliest radical feminist groups.

One of the key methodological tenets to arise out of Daly's radical feminist commitment to methodicide is the elevation of the category of women's experience to epistemic primacy in the generation of feminist theory. Like the early radical feminists Daly argues, in Beyond God the Father, that women need to confront masculinist methodology that draws exclusively upon male experience in the construction of theory. Women can do this, Daly thinks, by making that which was marginal central, that is, by valorising women's experience over all other sources of knowledge. As she writes: 'The essential thing is to hear our*own* words, always giving prior attention to our *own* experience, never letting prefabricated theory have *authority* over us'.[23] (Author's emphasis). She charges that patriarchal intellectual history has been marked by an indifference to women's perception of their own experience. On the basis of this she argues that women cannot rely upon the opinions of 'experts' in any field of enquiry.Women must 'listen' to their own experience, for it is out of their experiences of oppression that new political analyses, concepts and strategies will emerge. She writes: 'Males have posed the questions ... They have hidden the Questions. The task for feminists now is con-questioning, con-questing for the deep sources of the questions'.[24] It is imperative that women become the 'subjects and not mere objects of enquiry'.[25] The 'Gyn/Ecological

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18 Ibid., p.12.

19 Ibid., p.151.

20 Gyn/Ecology p.345.

21 Pure Lust p.viii.

22 Ibid., p.30.

23 Beyond God the Father p.189

24 Gyn/Ecology p.345.

25 Ibid., p.10.

method' that she goes on to develop is 'about women a-mazing all the male-authored "sciences of womankind"',[26] and about restoring women to the centre and to a positive valorisation. It is 'women's experiences, past and present' that constitute the 'primary sources' of the 'Gyn/Ecological' method.[27] Women's experience thus becomes the chief source of feminist theoretical legitimacy and authority.

In order to come to knowledge of their situation, then, in order to 'see' (*theoria*), women must *reflect* on their experience. Yet she recognises that part of the problem for women lies in actually getting to the point at which a woman can perceive 'reality' as patriarchalShe attributes the fact that many women do not so recognise their oppressed state as due to the complex and intricate workings 'patriarchy', which is a 'Male Maze' that operates through myriad patterns of deception and channels its 'messages' through subliminal pathways that make it difficult to see and confront.

One of the chief aims of Daly's writing is to bring women to the threshold of awareness of their oppression through a particular radical feminist process of reflection: consciousness-raising. This is the second 'signature' feature of radical feminist theory to which Daly ascribesOne can hardly overestimate the importance of consciousness-raising to her feminist work. It is her privileged mode of analysis, her method of practice and her theory of social change all rolled into one. Moreover it follows directly from her radical feminist commitment to a policy of 'methodicide'. The rationale behind consciousness-raising is that there exists a discrepancy between the 'appearance' of the social world and its ordering mechanisms - a perception that is the result of the social process of conditioning - and the 'reality'. As Daly acknowledges: ' ... there is no 'one-shot' cure for a lifetime of conditioning to dependency'.[28] However:

> Women can raise each other's consciousness of it, and encourage each other to take the risks necessary to become free. The process of discovering and analyzing the social mechanisms that reinforce this state is itself liberating and opens the way to creativity of a radical sort ... At least implicitly, there is understanding that here, among women, is the source of independent challenge to 'the way things have always been'. This beginning to be together is the beginning of the end of female dependence.[29]

This action is not mere exhibitionist 'therapy'; the point of the exercise is for a woman to come 'into knowledge of her anger, which means getting ready for action.[30] Consciousness-raising is not 'navel-gazing': it isabout identifying the parameters, the gaps and contradictions of androcentric

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26 Ibid.

27 Ibid., p.27.

28 Beyond God the Father p. 55.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid., pp. 336-37.

society as a prelude to the discovery that it is not the only possible social organisation, not the whole 'world', that there is more than this in actuality and in possibility. The ultimate promise of consciousness-raising is thus the intimation and visioning of other realities other than that of the status quo.

The importance of consciousness-raising in Daly's workclearly mirrors the practice of the early radical feminist groups. The method of consciousness-raising was pioneered by the New York Radical Women in 1968. The group began hold 'rap' sessions in which women were encouraged to talk about their personal experiences. These sessions may have been influenced by the Maoist practice of 'speaking bitterness' or the 'Guatemalan guerrilla approach'[31]. Women would listen to each others worries, their unspoken desires, their fears and unfulfilled needs and investigate the specific causes of their malcontent. Through this kind of analysis they discovered that what they tended to consider their own personal idiosyncrasies were better understood in terms of women's social roles. A 'personal' problem was seen to have a social cause and thus a political solution. Relating the personal to the political became the method of discussion in the group.[32]

This kind of analysis was controversial, however, and not generally accepted amongst feminists in 1968. A group led by Peggy Dobbins splintered from the New York Radical Women, for example, in protest at the 'rap' method. These women were more interested in political actions than in what they considered to be feminist 'navel-gazing'. They formed a group entitled W.I.T.C.H. (Women's International Conspiracy from Hell) which carried out a number of actions, including hexing the New York Stock Exchange on Halloween 1968.

Notwithstanding such developments the influence of consciousness-raising slowly gained legitimacy. On Thanksgiving weekend, in 1968, Kathie Sarachild, a member of the New York Radical Women, presented a paper at the first Women's Liberation Conference in Chicago entitled 'A Program for Feminist "Consciousness-Raising"'. In the paper Sarachild formalised the process that the New York women had been using. There was a heated debate about its use as a political method, but gradually it was taken up by other groups. In 1969 the Redstockings committed themselves to using the method of consciousness-raising. In their 'Manifesto' (7 July, 1969) they articulated what they took to be its function, purpose and process. They argued that the aim of feminist consciousness-raising is to challenge women's socialisation and ingrained thought patterns. Women are encouraged to manifest their anger, to direct it towards the source of the problem (male supremacy) to seek to challenge it. The process itself often reveals not only the depth of women's socialisation but also the quite remarkable capacity of women to 'see through' it.

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31 Eisenstein, H., op. cit., p.35.

More than any other radical feminist writer Daly has mapped out the terrain covered by women coming to radical feminist consciousness. The novelty of her approach consists in the attempts to 'mythologise' the process, thereby elevating a political strategy to spiritual, ontological status. The process of 'A-Mazing' the 'Labyrinthine' deceptions of prevailing social reality and entering into a new 'postpatriarchal' consciousness is imaged in terms of a 'Journey' or soul quest through different 'passages' or 'spheres' to an 'Otherworld' that is located above/beneath/beyond the male-engendered world. Women who embark upon the Journey are 'Spinsters: their purpose is to 'spin and weave, mending and creating unity of consciousness'.[33] As women 'Spin' they whirl and twirl the 'threads of life on the axis of our own be-ing', dis-covering 'the lost thread of connectedness within the cosmos, repairing this web as we create'.[34] The basis of Daly's hope lies in the fact that 'perfect programming is rare',[35] and that women possess native reserves of 'gynergy' (Emily Culpepper), 'the female energy which both comprehends and creates who we are; that impulse in ourselves that has never been possessed by the patriarchy nor by any male'.[36] The goal of the Journey is to 'Realize' (and to inspire other women to Realize) 'active potency', the 'power to act'.[37] On Daly's view women have been coerced and/or seduced into 'forgetting' these 'Archaic' powers. The task before them is, she avers, to 'unforget'[38], to 're-member' (put back together) the fragments that *once* were whole. Fundamental to this agenda is the supposition that 'This has not always been a man's world'; in other words, that 'reality' has not always been framed through patriarchal constructions.

Journeyers/Spinsters will encounter blockages and obstacles on the route to liberation. For example women can be 'Spooked' by tacit messages in the language, behaviour and institutions of patriarchal males, by the behaviour of other women who function as 'tokens',[39] and by countless 'unnamed fears'. In order to strengthen themselves for their encounters with patriarchal 'demons' that 'block' 'Voyaging' women must 'separate' themselves from the old patriarchally-defined patterns of

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32 See Hole and Levine, op. cit., p.125.

33 Gyn/Ecology, p. 386.

34 Ibid., p.390. C.f.: Nelle Morton's vivid account of a vision of the Spider Woman in 'The Goddess as Metaphoric Image' in Judith Plaskow and Carol P. Christ (eds.) Weaving the Visions: New Patterns in Feminist Spirituality (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1989) pp. 114-115.

35 Pure Lust p.165.

36 Culpepper, Emily 'Female History/Myth Making' The Second Wave volume 4, no.1 (spring, 1975), pp.14-17. Cited in the Wickedary p.77.

37 Daly treats the distinction between active and passive potency in Pure Lust p.63.

38 Ibid., p.20.

39 See the analysis of the 'Painted Bird' Gyn/Ecology pp. 317-8.

'stunted'/ 'feminine' behaviour through the cultivation of 'good (that is life-affirming) qualities (operative habits)' or 'virtues'[40] which facilitate movement through the gateways and towards liberation. Thus she believes that women can combat the obstructions by 'Spooking/Speaking' back. They can learn 'methods of dispossession'.[41] As they Journey deeper women begin to develop new cognitive capacities such as ' positive paranoia' , the power to perceive connections between different phenomena.[42]

Some feminists view the metaphor of the Journey with suspicion, citing its associations with (patriarchal) religion and, in particular, with the practice of ascesis. For Daly, however, it represents a peculiarly apt heuristic device through which to map out her politico-ethical proposals. The aim of her discourse is to inspire women to release the 'spring of Be-ing', such that they can 'move' out of 'patriarchal reality' by engaging their wills in certain ways. By depicting life as a journey through hazards and dangers - cognitive moral and physical - which women meet and overcome, she is enabled to identify modes of behaviour and personal qualities that either help or hinder the possibility of a successful journey.

Other critics have put forward the view that Daly's depiction of the psychological dynamics of consciousness is inadequate and misleading. For example, the British philosopher Jean Grimshaw claims that in her writing: 'Psychic life ... has no endemic or intrinsic complexity, ambivalence or contradictions. Tangles, knots, and spirals would all disappear if only the violence and brainwashing to which women are subjected could be removed. Self-knowledge could be wholly unproblematic'.[43] I think this is an unsympathetic and unfair reading of Daly's method and agenda. In fact, she holds a far less positivistic understanding of women's psychic growth than Grimshaw is willing to concede. Daly is clearly cognisant of the suffering undergone by women during the consciousness-raising process.[44] Paradoxes, barriers and contradictions are all marked features of the Journey. Moreover, the Journey is not straightforwardly linear; one can be paralysed into immobility or even go backwards. Daly maintains of course that most of the suffering that women presently experience is due to the system of sexual domination. But she recognises that whilst injustice can be vanquished, human conflict and natural limitations cannot be removed. In

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40 Pure Lust p.262.

41 Ibid., p. 318.

42 Ibid., p. 316.

43 Grimshaw, Jean Feminist Philosophers: Women's Perspectives on Philosophical Traditions (Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1986), p.9.

44 Pure Lust p.296.

other words, some of the psychological 'tangle's and 'knots' that characterise human life will remain.

Grimshaw further argues that the metaphorisation of consciousness-raising in terms of a Soul Journey presents women with an otherworldly hope that bears little or no relation to the hard realities of political life. She writes: 'The breakthrough into new realms of the Spinsters' weaving of cosmic tapestries is really a retreat from the world. Daly offers us an exhilarating and strenuous myth of female salvation, rather than any hope of common or effective political action'.[45] In other words, Daly's 'spiritualisation' of the consciousness-raising process effectively depoliticises it. What Grimshaw means by 'common or effective political action' here is unclearIn defence of Daly, however, one might point out that, as her analysis of patriarchal myth reveals, the act of myth-making can be profoundly political in an important sense. Any cross-cultural analysis of creation stories and myths manifests the important role they play in the creation of human 'worlds'. Yet most of these stories have been the products and reflections of male-dominated societies. Women have seldom had their experiences lifted to mythic levels, except where it is filtered through the male perspective. Whilst Daly's mythologising activities do not provide feminists with blueprint for the good society or, indeed, with a detailed political plan, it does perform certain important political functions. Notably, the mythologisation of consciousness-raising can politicise women by awakening them to the reality of their subjugation and inspire them to revolt.

I submit that Daly's project to 'mythologise' the consciousness-raising process represents an important contribution to the radical feminist theory of consciousness-raising. In terms of *content* she brings to the fore, as perhaps no other radical feminist before, that feminism's role in effecting psycho-social transformation centres upon its ability to rearrange female energy patterns,[46] specifically to re-align female will and behaviour. For Daly feminism is thus 'not merely an issue but rather a new mode of being'.[47] Other social theorists, such as Herbert Marcuse, have noted the need for deep psychic change, but Daly's contribution lies in her protestation that the required psychic change is connected to overthrowing the system of sexual oppression.[48] It is axiomatic that: 'No social revolution, however "radical", that falls short of metapatriarchal movement can break the circles of repetition'.[49] Moral and intellectual re-alignments that do not take sexual alienation into account are thus inadequate if we are to move into a reality in which oppression *per se* is to end.

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45 Grimshaw op. cit., p.24.

46 Beyond God the Father p.xx.

47 Ibid., p.113.

48 Ibid., pp.98-99.

49 Gyn/Ecology p.42.

In terms of *form* Daly has led the way in creating another mode of feminist political discourse. She has shown that poetic narrative can play an important rhetorical role in bringing women to the threshold of political awareness, and in maintaining energy and political momentum once women enter the demystification process. Through such a narrative women are enabled to structure an often complex or even chaotic epistemological process. Moreover, it structures women's experiences in a way that enables us to persevere in the face of seemingly intractable obstacles and in the face of great social pressure to conform to the standard ways of looking at the world. This is partly achieved by the emphasis upon women's native energy and powers, the power of women's connections with each other, and the eulogising of a certain wildness in women which is ever beyond the domestication of men. Other radical feminists such as Susan Griffin have since followed Daly's refusal to follow the linear format of male-stream political theory and gone on to explore a more poetic, metaphorical mode.[50]

Daly's mapping of the terrain of feminist consciousness illustrates a third feature of radical feminism: the conviction that 'women's experience' is a unified political category. This in turn is predicated upon the assumption that women's situation is basically the same the world over. For Daly this situation is simply the product of present social arrangements. She uses the overarching concept of 'patriarchy' - which means literally 'the rule of the father(s)' - to conceptualise the way in which female oppression is organised.[51] Her use of this concept systematises a number of distinct ideas but, in general terms, she conceives of patriarchy as a system of structures, institutions, and ideology created by men in order to sustain and recreate male power and female subordination. The term 'patriarchy' was used by Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir, but was introduced into radical feminist theory by Kate Millett in her influential book Sexual Politics.[52] Millett argued that the system of male domination or patriarchy is a universal phenomenon. In other words, she considers it to be a fact that in any given empirical culture, and in terms of power and value, women are 'the second sex' in comparison to men.

Following Millet Daly views patriarchy as a universal phenomenon. One of the earliest formulations of this idea comes in Beyond God the Father wherein she writes:

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50 Griffin, Susan Made From This Earth (London: The Women's Press, 1982).

51 The term 'patriarchy' has been part of the vocabulary of political theory since the seventeeenth century debate about the function of the monarchy. During this debate suppoprters of the absolute right of the monarch argued that the power of the monarch over the masses was essentially the same as that exercised by a father over his family: both were sanctioned by both God and nature. See Valerie Bryson Feminist Political Theory: An Introduction (London: Macmillan, 1992) p.184.

52 Millett Sexual Politics (London: Virago, 1985; originally published 1970).

> There exists a worldwide phenomenon of sexual caste, basically the same whether one lives in Saudi Arabia or in Sweden. This planetary sexual caste system involves birth-ascribed hierarchically ordered groups whose members have unequal access to goods, services, and prestige and to physical and mental well-being.[53]

Whilst the specifics of women's oppressions may vary according to socio-historical and geo-political factors, women are oppressed as women cross-culturally. In other words patriarchy is an overriding feature of contemporary global society. This state of affairs, whilst operating through myriad, complex social processes is predicated upon a unified logic. According to this logic structural inequalities such as racism, socially constructed poverty and war are interpreted as deformities *within* patriarchy. As Daly puts it: sexism is the 'root and paradigm of the various forms of oppression'.[54] Thus can she speak about the experiences of exploited female workers in the Third World, war, 'environmentally caused ill-health' and the 'rape' of the earth and its animal and plant species, all under the rubric of 'patriarchal oppression'.

There is no suggestion that the political mechanisms supporting male social domination and female subordination are not heterogeneous and complex. Indeed, Daly's analysis of patriarchy is characterised by its emphasis upon making connections between multi-levelled, diverse phenomena. In Gyn/Ecology and Pure Lust, for example, she brings to critical attention the intricate connections between different aspects of the Western socio-cultural edifice, linking religious myth with nuclear technology, and the institution of heterosexual 'love' with male social dominance.

Thus Daly argues that whilst factors in woman's situation such as class, race or ethnic group may modify the fundamental sex oppression, it is both possible and necessary to describe the forces in such a way as to make sense of the experiences of women across these boundaries. Such forms of exploitation are conceptualised as mere 'variations in style, method, and degree of overtness' of patriarchal oppression.[55] The insistence that patriarchy is as it were *sui generis* and not reducible to any other social phenomenon, such as economic relations, raises the question of how it first arose. But she is not preoccupied with this question and concentrates instead upon the fact that males wield power over women both now and very far back into history. She believes that it is the practical question as to how males maintain this power that needs to be analysed.

The conviction that all forms of exploitation are extensions of male supremacy is well attested in early radical feminist literature. In the 'Fourth World Manifesto,' for example, women are viewed as a colonised group, with war and national imperialism being described as male-

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53 Beyond God the Father p. 2.

54 Ibid., p. 56.

supremacist institutions.[56] The same 'universalist' idea of male domination occurs inTi-Grace Atkinson's influential book Amazon Odyssey[57] which was published a year after Beyond God the Father, and in the work of other radical feminist writers such as Adrienne Rich[58] and Andrea Dworkin.[59]

When we flesh out Daly's concept of patriarchy we find that her writing represents a continuation and development of some pre-established elements in former radical feminist work, and a movement away from other elements. In Gyn/Ecology, for example, she follows and extends the practice of other radical feminists in putting forward political analyses of domestic and sexual violence against women, 'cultural practices' such as cliterodectomy, *suttee/sati*, footbinding, 'witch-burning', and institutions such as modern medicine.[60] Each of these practices have been analysed by scholars either before or since the publication of Gyn/Ecology.

Whilst Daly focuses critical attention upon male power at such sites as women's control of their bodies, physical and sexual violence and sexuality, however, her main contribution has been directed toward an analysis of the 'psychic' violence done to women through the sphere of 'culture'. For Daly believes that the patriarchal context is one in which physical violence is present, but in which 'mind-rape' is more potent, in terms of social control, than the rape of women's bodies.

Again, the analytic emphasis upon the psychological aspects of oppression was already a feature of much radical feminist writing. The targeting of 'culture' as the medium for the transmission of androcentric thought forms was always a radical feminist strategy. From the beginning radical feminists sought to interrogate the common depiction of women in the received canon of classic and contemporary literature. One early example of this is the work of The Feminists on Children's Media group which examined and criticised sex stereotyping of the characters in children's literature.[61] Another more famous example is Millett's analysis of culture in Sexual Politics. Millett examines the way in which female 'consent' to subordination is somehow engineered through social conditioning into sex roles rather than simply through a crude use of force. She singles out Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory for vilification, especially the notion of 'penis-envy', which she sees as part of a male backlash against the gains made by first-wave

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55 Ibid., p.xvii

56 See Barbara Burris et al. 'Fourth World Manifesto' in Ann Koedt, Levine and Raponeop. cit. pp.322-357.

57 Atkinson, Ti-Grace Amazon Odyssey (N.Y.: Links, 1974).

58 Rich, Adrienne Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution (London: Virago, 1977; originally published in New York: Norton, 1976).

59 Dworkin, Andrea Woman Hating (N.Y.: E. P. Dutton, 1974).

60 See Koedt op. cit., pp.131-133.

campaigners and suffragettes.[62] She also analyses the political dimension of descriptions of erotic love in a number of influential male writers such as D. H. Lawrence and Norman Mailer. Of course, this focus upon male assumptions and conceptions of sexual desire would not formerly have been seen as legitimate material for political analysis, sex being perceived as belonging to the realm of the 'personal' rather than the 'political'.[63]

Whilst Daly builds upon the precedent radical feminist analysis of culture, her contribution - particularly to the radical feminist development of the concept of patriarchy - is nevertheless quite distinctive. Like other radical feminists she exposes and condemns the physical violence that is enacted against women in the name of 'cultural practices' . But she emphasises that such atrocities do not exist in isolation, but are part of a whole discourse or system of social knowledge. She goes beyond the analysis of the individual practices in the theorisation of a link between them: the 'sado-ritual syndrome'. The seven characteristic features of this discourse are: 'an obsession with purity'; 'total erasure of responsibility for the atrocities performed through such rituals'; 'an inherent tendency to "catch on" and spread'; 'the use of women 'as scapegoats and token torturers'; 'compulsive orderliness, obsessive repetitiveness, and fixation upon minute details, which divert attention from the horror'; the normalisation and even normatizing of 'behavior which at other times and places is unacceptable'; and, finally, the 'legitimation of the ritual by the rituals of "objective" scholarship - despite the appearances of disapproval'.[64] This syndrome is represented as a major feature of global patriarchal power.

Daly's analysis of the sado-ritual syndrome leads her to reason that *all* women are affected by a global context in which the physical abuse, mutilation and murder of *some* women is defended through the anthropological rhetoric of 'cultural practice', 'custom' and 'rite'. This conclusion follows from an the conviction that such atrocities have a *systemic* function. The central issue here is one of social control. The various 'atrocities' are not carried out, Daly says, 'on a one-to-one basis' but are 'inflicted by the representatives of patriarchy upon vulnerable individual women,'[65] and not every woman suffers in the same way. Moreover women themselves are often recruited to physically carry out the atrocities. Indeed, in many of these practices mothers are led into participation in the mutilation of their own daughters. As she writes: 'It is important to remember that in patriarchy

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61 Ibid., pp.94-106.

62 Millett, op. cit., p.189

63 See also Anne Koedt 'The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm' in Koedt op. cit. pp198-207.

64 Gyn/Ecology pp.131-133.

65 Ibid., p.110.

women are vehicles that incarnate the male presence'.[66] This should not blind us, however, to the over all context in which women seek to regulate other women's behaviour (often within the discursive framework of initiation into 'femininity' or 'womanhood' and family domesticity). These female practices thus serve to reinforce the system of patriarchal control, though insofar as women are acting against each other the patriarchal nature of these forms of social control are obscured.

By highlighting the harmful effects of social entities not conventionally regarded as 'violent' Daly extends the boundaries of what, in common parlance, may be included under the rubric of 'violence' to encompass the subtle pejorations of language, and the way in which different forms of coercion - ideology and physical brutality - interact to force women to act in ways that inhibit or hinder their self-expression. In her use of the concept of violence, then, a number of cultural artefacts (like myth) and institutions (like heterosexuality) are exposed as forms of social control. In her later work the effects of patriarchal violence are extend from women to non-human nature in its myriad forms. Thus, in a manner analogous to women, other creatures and non-animal nature suffer from patriarchal stereotyping and objectification.[67] The earth 'herself' is mutilated and abused.

The emphasis that Daly places upon the realm of the symbolic, that is culture, in women's oppression has attracted criticism from some feminists. Susan Thistlethwaite is representative of this critical perspective when she writes:

> There are women who, because of their economic, social and racial location, have no access to any of the spheres Daly describes. There can be no reintegration of nature and history without confronting the vast differences in women's historical conditions and making a methodological shift in the light of those differences. We cannot 'Leap with Wanderlust' over poverty, over racism, over real history ... contact with the voices of historical difference and a confrontation with them as different is as crucial to our survival and God's as is the reintegration with nature.[68]

Likewise Daly's methods of consciousness-raising have drawn criticism from certain quarters for the emphasis on the 'psychic' or 'spiritual' aspects of oppression to the neglect of the material realities of most women's lives. As the British philosopher Jean Grimshaw writes 'the routes Daly offers us to achieve female freedom are problematic, and the sort of "freedom" she invites us to realize may have little connection with the practical and material struggles of many women's lives'.[69] Whilst

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66 Pure Lust p. 143.

67 Ibid., pp. 123-24.

68 Thistlethwaite, Susan B. J. 'God and Her Survival in a Nuclear Age' Feminist Studies 4:73-88 (spring 1988, p.85.

69 Grimshaw, op. cit., p.2-3.

both writers are undoubtedly correct in pointing to the dangers of an ahistorical, idealist account of oppression, it should not be concluded that Daly dismisses of the value of economic analyses in the understanding of women's situation. One must recognise, however, the particular theoretical contribution that she sees herself as making. She openly acknowledges her specialisation in the analysis of myth, language and other cultural artefacts. The particular theoretical perspective adopted in her radical feminist writings is built upon the assumption that power is not localised in economic structures, but rather diffused throughout the cultural sphere. She writes:

> While economic impoverishment is an enormous factor in holding women down, it is not a complete explanation of female oppression, for women's minds are possessed. It is crucial that feminists constructing economic analyses of the condition of women focus attention on making these interconnections between psychic oppression and economic oppression.[70]

It is true that she privileges changes in subjectivity over changes in economic and political systems. But she does not ignore economic realities; she simply exercises a choice (one informed by her particular talents and interests) as to which aspect of the patriarchal system to 'deconstruct'.

Clearly, in systematic terms Daly underplays the way in which material inequalities are linked to ideological practices. There is now a sense in the work of ethicists and theologians of the importance of the establishment of economic justice as a precondition for 'liberation' and full personhood. As Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza points out, in In Memory Of Her, women's power, independence and freedom cannot be solely nor even primarily formulated in terms of personalist-individualist and biological female power ... it has to be socio-political.[71] Whilst we fail to find in Daly's social ethics a commitment to any recognised form of political economy, such as capitalism or socialism, feminist analysis, as Dale Spender observes, cannot simply be reduced to the question as to whether it is language and culture or economic factors that cause oppression for they are interconnected in their operation. As she writes: 'One cannot be transformed without the other if women are to be liberated and patriarchy is to be prevented from persisting'.[72] From Daly's perspective it is quite possible for some (token) women to gain economic liberation but still function according to patriarchal norms and values.

Whilst taking up and developing strands within an extant body of radical feminist literature Daly distances herself from certain other strands of early radical feminist writing in her unremitting emphasis upon the realm of culture. These strands emphasise socio-economic organisation and

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70 Pure Lust p.94.

71 Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth In Memory of Her: a Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins (London: SCM Press, 1983) p.18.

72 Spender, Dale Man Made Language (London: Pandora, 2nd edition, 1992) p.6.

reproduction as the most important sites for feminist activism. For example, one of the chief and abiding concerns of second-wave feminist theory has been to understand the relation between women's reproductive roles and their physical and psychological oppressions.For example, Shulamith Firestone in The Dialectic of Sex shows how the political institution of motherhood helps to re-produce patriarchal social relations. Firestone argues that reproduction is the root cause of women's subordination by men and that women need to regain control over their bodies. She claims to develop 'a materialist view of history based on sex itself',[73] by taking Marxian analysis 'one step further to its roots in the biological division of the sexes'. In Firestone's conception radical feminism represents not an abandonment but a development of Marxist class analysis. In this scenario women constitute a 'sex class'.[74] Human biology and those socio-political institutions designed so as to protect its determining power, such as the family, constitutes the 'material'[75] foundation of history, but technological changes have now made it possible and viable for women to take control of their biology and their reproductive capacity in a way analogous to Marx's argument that changes in capitalist production would provide the labouring masses with the opportunity to escape from bondage. Though Firestone has been attacked for being technologically determinist (it is quite possible that artificial reproduction could be used to enhance male domination) her work is important in analysing the role played by the family and marriage in the oppression of women.Her fundamental thesis was later elaborated in a different way by both Dorothy Dinnerstein and Nancy Chodorow.[76] In Daly's writings however, there is very little discussion of the family as one of the major forces that link women to compulsory heterosexuality, economic dependence, and the patriarchal ideology of motherhood.

Because Daly - like Millett and other radical feminists - holds the oppression of women to be universal, crossing race and class boundaries 'sisterhood' becomes an empowering concept. Women are supported, in the early stages of consciousness-raising, by the recognition that they are not alone, that other women are experiencing the same kinds of discontent and anger. This connects with sisterhood for healing and liberating action cannot take place in isolation. She writes:

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73 Firestone, Shulamith The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution (N.Y: Wiliam Morrow, 1970), p.5.

74 Ibid., pp. 1-12.

75 Firestone, op. cit., p.8. 'Material' in the Marxist sense 'signifies a relation to the economic development of society, via changes in the modes of production and exchange, with the resulting creation of classes and of class struggle'. Hester Eisenstein op. cit., p.16.

76 Dinnerstein, Dorothy The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise (N.Y.: Harper Colophon, 1977); and Nancy Chodorow The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychanalysis and the Sociology of Gender (Berkely: University of California Press, 1978). See Bryson, op. cit., pp.198ff for later developments.

> The individual's sense of reality depends upon some kind of communal consent. It wouldbe absurd to think that singly a woman can win the struggle for psychic wholeness. The sense of reality that such an individual is trying to sustain would be pitted against a system with enormous resource for persuading her of her error, sinfulness, or mental illness ... The 'bonding' phenomenon among women, expressed by the word 'sisterhood', is therefore essential to the battle against false consciousness.[77]

The term 'women'thus constitutes a unity for Daly: 'a Cosmic Commonality, a tapestry of connectedness which women as Websters/Fates are constantly weaving'.[78] Indeed, her life-work may be interpreted as an address and an exhortation to all women in the name of sisterhood.

Daly'spresupposition of the fundamental sameness of women's position is disputed by feminists with different analytic priorities. They allege that she is guilty of presenting an unnecessarily limited and limiting view of 'women's experience', failing to give an accurate account of the facts of women's diverse situations both in terms of 'western society' and in terms of the 'global' context.Instead of illuminating the concrete realities of oppression her analysis often falls into abstraction. For example in emphasising the injustices suffered by women it tends to encourage a view of women as innocent and powerless victims of male violence, rather than of women as the agents of political resistance and historical change.[79] In Daly's view patriarchy is predicated upon a view of men as 'the enemy', a view which leads inexorably to lesbian separatism - which is never going to be a live option for most women.[80] Thus men, who are conceived as potential partners in the project of the attainment of human androgyny depicted in Beyond God the Father, come to personify ontological parasites upon women's be-ing in all its manifestations. It has been suggested moreover that the horrific experiences suffered by some women (for example genital mutilation) are undermined by Daly's attempts to link it in with other forms of oppression (for example fashion). Whilst her political aims may be laudable such a practice elides vast differences in experience.[81] In sum Daly's theory of patriarchy is ahistorical: it fails to track the presence of patriarchy through specific socio-economic and political forms. Ultimately, patriarchy is viewed as a static phenomenon because she fails to show how it develops and changes.

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77 Beyond God the Father p. 50.

78 Pure Lust p.26

79 See Bryson, op. cit., p.186; Hester Eisenstein, op. cit., p.xii; and Lynn Segal Is the Future Female? Troubled Thoughts on Contemporary Feminism (London: Virago, 1987), p.xi.

80 Bryson, op. cit., p.186

81 C.f.: Bryson, op. cit., p.191.

Clearly, the division of sex represents only one of many bifurcations deserving of political scrutiny by feminists. I have already alluded to the fact that Daly's theory of patriarchy is based upon different analytic priorities to certain other strands of radical feminist writing and that Daly has been criticised for her relative neglect of socio-economic factors in perpetuating oppression. She has been similarly criticised for allegedly eliding the experiences of women of colour. She was attacked, most famously, by the African American feminist poet Audre Lorde in the late 1970s for not providing an analysis of the function of racial factors in the global mechanisms of capitalist patriarchy and for not utilising the knowledge that has been generated from black women.[82] This criticism was later developed and applied to a whole generation of white feminists. Linda Nicholson points out the irony of the fact that from the late 1960s to the mid-80s feminist theory whilst theoretically encouraging differences and denouncing universalist tendencies, in fact tended to issue from white, middle class women of North American or European origin. This tendency is explained by the fact that when 'radicals' like Daly began to engage in feminist theory the strategies and targets for action were relatively well-defined and clear. As we approach the end of the twentieth century, however, it has become clear that feminists are pursuing different targets and strategies. Feminist theory is now more sophisticated, of course: it is certainly more prolific in terms of publications - varying widely from complex explorations into subjectivity and a range of therapeutic practices, to better awareness of and engagement of the multifarious differences between women. As bell hooks notes, it was primarily 'bourgeois white women, both liberal and radical in perspective', who pioneered the idea of common oppression'.[83] Although Daly is correct in her aim of trying to promote political solidarity amongst women, her view of sisterhood as based on a common oppression is dangerously simplistic. Sisterhood is not something that is 'found' automatically when a woman comes to consciousness. Rather is it something that must be struggled for, as experience and its interpretation are checked by critical conversations with women occupying different socio-cultural locations (race, class, ethnicity) and with other disciplines (women's history, literature, psychology and anthropology).

Critics have argued, then that the attempt to forge a 'Cosmic Commonality' dissolves or elides all differences between women.[84] Daly is seen by many to be guilty of 'universalising' from her own perspective as a white, middle class lesbian, of transposing her knowledge about her own situation onto that of other women. This results in an inability to conceptualise adequately other

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82 Lorde, Audre 'An Open Letter to Mary Daly' in Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches (Freedom, California: Crossing Press, 1984), pp. 66-71.

83 Ibid.

84 Thistlethwaite op. cit., p.84.

forms of exploitation or dehumanisation as basic structures of women's oppression. The inattention displayed in her writings to the role played by race and class in the oppression of women means that, paradoxically, her analysis may in fact function so as to maintain the caste-status of women and other oppressed groups to the male, white, middle-class 'norm'. Her theory is thus a form of cultural imperialism.[85]

In Daly's later writings - such as Gyn/Ecology, Pure Lust and the Wickedary - a change in emphasis and rhetoric regarding the question of nature has been interpreted by some critics as evidence of 'essentialising'. Specifically, it is alleged that a naive 'Manichean' ontological dualism is operative, in her 'gynocentric' writings, in which 'woman' simply replaces 'man' as the privileged signifier. That Daly advocates such a position has become something of a critical commonplace in feminist theory.[86] The North American feminist Marsha Hewitt links this perceived tendency to certain strands of critical theory. She writes:

> In like fashion with Hegel and those elements of critical theory that address the woman question, Daly also reproduces and sustains reified, idealized concepts of 'woman' that arise out of an identity logic that marks most of this philosophical tradition. The core structure of her feminist philosophy conceptualizes an authentic female Being to which all women ultimately correspond, but from which they have become alienated through the dominating and repressive practices of patriarchy.[87]

The reification of female being in a feminist theory is a serious charge to make. If the accusation can be validated then the interpretation of Daly's thought that I wish to put forward is wrong. Moreover it would expose a serious contradiction in Daly's thought which claims participation in dynamic Be-ing as its goal. It is relevant therefore to address this question before proceeding any further.

I shall try to tackle the problem head on by analysing a passage, in Pure Lust, which could be argued to exemplify Daly's essentialist tendencies. Daly writes:

> Metapatriarchally moving women not only experience now but continue to choose to develop our differences from those who consciously and willingly perpetrate these horrors, and we recognize these differences as not merely accidental, but rather *essential*. The traditional concept of 'species,' especially of 'the human species' does not adequately encompass the differently oriented lives supposedly contained therein. I refer primarily to its

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85 See Bryson op. cit., pp.190f.

86 See for example Jean Grimshaw's paper 'Autonomy and Authenticity in Feminist Thinking' in Grimshaw op. cit; Hester Eisenstein, op. cit., p.11ff; Lynn Segal Lynn p.18ff; Ross Kraemer 'Review of Gyn/Ecology' Signs 1979 volume 5, no.3, pps. 254-56.

87 Hewitt, Marsha Aileen Critical Theory of Religion: A Feminist Analysis (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), p.134.

> grotesque blurring of differences between those whose intent and behavior is radically biophilic and those whose desensitized/decentralized, soulless and berserk (dis)orientation manifests 'gross inability to communicate' and fundamental enmity toward Life itself.[88]

It cannot be doubted that Daly's more extreme rhetoric concerning the 'biophilic be-ing' of women in contrast to the 'necrophilic be-ing' of patriarchal males does not facilitate understanding of her cause. Nevertheless, I am not convinced that passages such as the above necessarily mean that Daly has (inexplicably) changed her feminist tack. Let us look closer at what she actually says. Fundamentally she is making the point that the classical philosophical terminology of 'species', conceived in static terms, is an inadequate framework in which to articulate the vast differences between beings 'whose conscious behavior is wholly oriented in opposite directions'.[89] The emphasis is not upon innate characteristics but upon *the tendency to act in a certain way.* It is a mistake to infer from this that 'all women are biophilic and therefore good' and 'all men are necrophilic and therefore evil' for, as Daly insists, the kind of distinction that she is trying to make ' is not a simplistic bifurcation on the basis of gender. Patriarchy here is ... a disease attacking the core of consciousness in females as well as males'.[90] Fundamentally I read Daly as saying that all 'human' beings are born with the capacity to function 'biophilically', that is, ... but that this tendency may be 'blocked' or 'blighted' by the impact of patriarchal social conditioning. When Daly writes of the 'corpse-like, necrophilic "natures" of these [patriarchal] men[91] it is to the *tendency* to actualise values that are inimical to the flourishing of life that she refers, not to ...

With respect to women, it is not that Daly neglects differences (as some commentators allege), rather she incorporates them as important in defining the nature of women's oppression as women. In Pure Lust, for example, Daly writes:

> To simplify differences would be to settle for a less than Dreadful judgement of the multiple horrors of gynocide. It would also impoverish our imaginations, limiting our vision of the Otherworld Journey's dimensions ... Acknowledging the deep differences among friends/sisters is one of the most difficult stages of the Journey and it is essential for those who are sparking in free and independent friendship rather than merely melting into mergers.[92]

Daly's position cannot without the grossest misinterpretation be labelled 'essentialist'. Her view of 'woman' shows similarities with what has since become known as 'social constructionism'. Yet

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88 Pure Lust p. 351
89 Ibid., p.352.
90 Ibid., p.351.
91 Ibid., p.247. My parenthesis.
92 Ibid., p. 381.

unlike some proponents of this view Daly wants to affirm both the possibility and desirability of claiming the concept of 'woman' as a site for feminist politics, specifically as a 'centre' for emergent female subjectivities, a matrix for the generation and emergence of difference. This position I shall argue would appear to be most conducive to feminist theorising. The feminist theologian is acutely aware of the damage done to females by stereotypes and the patriarchal denigration and denial of our subject-status. We are also aware, however, that to dispense with the subject 'woman' would be to expose feminism to the danger of political self-annihilation.

The charge of essentialism is often made with little or no explanation of what the term 'essence' means within particular philosophical discourses (e.g. an Aristotelian or Lockean context). When we turn to the substance of Daly's thought on the matter, moreover, the charge of essentialism does not stick. As we shall see, her position is certainly not an essentialist theory in the Aristotelian sense and is, in fact, far more subtle than her critics give her credit for. Yet, to be labelled an 'essentialist' is, in the current feminist climate, to be guilty by association and, insofar as the acceptance of this view has become almost a critical *topos* of Dalyian scholarship, philosophically uninformed interpretation has become enshrined as valid, and part of a tradition which some feminist theologians, in reading such appraisals, have assimilated and propagated in their own work.

It is likely that critical misinterpretation has followed as a result of Daly's laterstrategic political choice for Otherness. Daly later seems to want to reclaim the female (though not the feminine). In the 'Feminist Postchristian Introduction' to the second edition of The Church and the Second Sex Daly comments on her former position in support of androgyny. She writes: 'Like de Beauvoir, she [herself] expressed the wish that "men and women can learn to 'set their pride beyond the sexual differentiation'... The time had not yet arrived when women would learn to set our pride not only beyond but in the sexual differentiation - not in the differentiation as defined by the patriarchs ("the eternal feminine'), but as defined by *us* '.[93] She later speaks of deviance 'from the "norm" which was first imposed but which can also be *chosen* on our own terms'.[94] 'Woman' thus becomes a site for a politics. The coherence of 'woman' derives not from its immutability and predictability but from its 'strategic efficacy' as a symbolic actor in the fight against oppression. 'Woman' may be informative but not binding. Daly affirms our right to construct (and take responsibility for) our gendered identity, our politics, our choices. But she does realise that gender structures our subjectivity, i.e. we come to an awareness of ourselves through social roles - we can be critical but there are real constraints imposed by our embeddedness across a variety of social (and psychosexual) contexts.

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93 'Feminist Postchristian Introduction' The Church and the Second Sex p.47.

Daly's writings declare themselves openly as radical feminist pieces. In some senseit makes her easier to criticise because her presuppositions are laid bare. We do not have to identify an underlying prejudice through the facade of 'objectivity' or 'neutralityIt may be that, with respect to the question of essentialism, Daly is being attacked *as a radical feminist*. It may be that a certain 'politics of criticism' is at work in the critical reception of her work. A glance through some of this literature throws up certain common rhetorical tendencies that depict Daly's work as representative of a strand of radical feminist theory that has fallen into disfavour and disrepute amongst academic feminists. As we have already seen, she has attracted opposition from many quarters, being frequently seen to measure up at the wrong end of the rule of 'political correctness'. This kind of misunderstanding is often motivated by political factors, most especially the politics of representation operative in current feminist theory with regard to 'old-style' radical feminism of the type Daly is seen to advocate. Radical feminists are popularly represented (increasingly in purportedly feminist reviews) as something of a bad hangover from the seventies - man-hating, dungaree-wearing dykes who cling to outmoded, unsophisticated 'universalist', 'essentialist' analyses of male oppression. This kind of stereotyping constitutes, at best, uninformed interpretation and, at worst, systematic political erasure. This caricature of radical feminism - a depiction through which Daly's work is often viewed - is, I argue, not entirely fair and needs to be deconstructed in order for any adequate 'dialogue' to take place.

Undoubtedly, greater attention on the theoretical level to the sexual division of labour and the capitalist economy (with its attendant legal system) which structure the complex ways in which the ideology of male supremacy and domination affects women's concrete lives, would protect Daly's analysis against charges of 'idealism' .A fully systematic feminist analysis would require some modifications of Daly's radical feminist method.Such a method would have to take into account the social, economic, political, cultural, racial and psychological contexts of female oppression of either a limited geo-political reality (for example 'western society') or the wider global situation. For whilst it is perfectly legitimate for Daly to orient her analysis to the ideological realm the need for a careful analysis of the social sphere cannot be underestimated. This will involve looking through the eyes of those who suffer injustice, those who struggle to live amidst perverted, demonic structures. In the personal realm an equally complex interplay of psychological, social, economic and 'unaccounted for factors' (Mary Hunt) are continuously at workWhat is needed then is an in depth social analysis in order to unmask the truth about women's plight across diverse socio-economic and political situations.

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94 Ibid., p.50.

This means that Daly's work itself must be subject to the 'demystification' process as part of the movement into theological maturity. Much work has already been done on exposing Daly's prejudices by Audre Lorde, Elizabeth Spelman and others for example. Daly needs to be sensitive to such criticisms. That diversity and multiplicity must be a fundamental datum of feminist theology in practice stems from the recognition that gender is a cultural construction with multiple and simultaneous identities (in Daly's case white, lesbian and working class) Feminist theology needs to be sensitive to the interplay of such factors in analysis if we are to name the oppressions that constrain us.

Given Daly's understanding of the operation of patriarchal power, the question arises as to the kind of approach women may adopt in order to alter the current situation and effect real change in society. Here we shall move into a discussion of the fourth feature of radical feminist theory to which Daly has made a contribution. Daly supports the authors of the 'Fourth World manifesto' in their contention that for a woman to 'submerge' herself in some male-dominated organisation or movement is 'self-defeating'.[95] Fundamentally she calls for a realignment of female energies (i) away from men (ii) and towards themselves and other women. This realignment represents a refusal to participate in the patriarchal 'game', which is predicated upon the re-routing of female energy towards individual men, to the maintenance of their physical and emotional well-being, and the perpetuation of androcentric society. In Daly's writings this strategy is called separatism.

The theme of separatism is a common though by no means ubiquitous theme in radical feminist writings. The particular form espoused by Daly is influenced by several strands of separatist theory. The first strand derives from an earlier generation of feminist activists, notably Virginia Woolf and her concept of an 'Outsider's Society',[96] and from the 'first-wave' feminist theory of 'bad conduct'. For Woolf separatism means to move outside a given society, to become a stranger to it. The theory of bad conduct emerged out of the nineteenth century women's campaign for the vote. At first such women tried to gain the acceptance of influential males and to stay within the bounds of 'social respectability'. They failed in the sense that the socially powerful males remained unwilling to give up their power over women. Indeed these women were still mocked and ridiculed. It was the 'Suffragettes' who initiated a theory of bad conduct, realising that, as Dale Spender writes, 'men would yield power only when they had to, only when they were so inconvenienced by retaining it that it was easier to give it up'.[97] Radical feminists in the 1960s developed similar attitudes,[98] in

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95 Beyond God the Father p.53

96 Woolf, Virgina A Room of One's Own/Three Guineas edited with an introduction by Morag Shiach (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); c.f.: 'Original Reintroduction Beyond God the Father p.xv.

97 Spender, Man Made Language p.xi

part by looking back to this extant tradition of feminist resistance and in part by learning from the movement for Black liberation in 1960s which used separatism in the pursuit of its political objectives.

As both Gyn/Ecology and Pure Lust show, Daly has been influenced directly by Marilyn Frye's essay 'Some Reflections on Separatism and Power'[99] Following Frye, Daly argues that by denying men access to themselves and their energies women not only deny men a substantial 'flow of benefits' but also assume power for themselves. For women control who has access to them and their energies and under what conditions. Such a move is at the same time an exercise in self-definition. The politics of separatism are thus founded upon the view that one way to change the distribution of power, in a given situation, is for those who are presently powerless to separate off and empower themselves. This kind of rhetoric is, however, misleading for it implicitly begs the question: separate from what or from whom?

Let us look at the definition of separatism given by Daly in the Wickedary. Separatism is: 'Theory and actions of Radical feminists who choose separatism from the Dissociated State of patriarchy in order to release the flow of elemental energy and Gynophilic communication; radical withdrawal of energy from warring patriarchy and transferral of this energy to women's selves'.[100] We immediately note the language in which this definition is couched. To begin with it is not a credal statement for 'segregation'. It is important to distinguish between separatism (a political strategy originated and pursued by those suffering oppression) and segregation (the involuntary separation of a minority or subordinate group from the dominant group, for example: the Warsaw ghetto in which Polish Jews were confined, the segregation of black and white people in the southern states of the United States, and the South African policy of apartheid). Daly's definition does not even suggest a self-imposed segregation. Nor does it specify in any detail when and where feminists should physically separate themselves from males and androcentric institutions.

There are basically two aspects to Daly's understanding of separatism. The first aspect involves a withdrawal of allegiance from males and patriarchal institutions and androcentric practices (e.g. heterosexuality). The second aspect concerns the affirmation of other women and 'gynocentric' practices ('Lesbianism').[101] Let us look at each of these aspects in turn.

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98 See 'The Fourth World Manifesto' in Koedt, Levine and Rapone, op. cit.

99 Frye, Marilyn 'Some Reflections on Separatism and Power' in The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory (Trumansburg, N.Y: The Crossing Press, 1983), pp.95-109.

100 The Wickedary p.96.

101 Daly capitalises 'Lesbian' when referring to women who are 'woman-identified, having rejected false loyalties to men on all levels'. (It is debatable whether, in patriarchal society, Daly thinks it possible that any woman could ever have an 'equal' relationship with a man, whatever that may mean). This she asserts is the

> Firstly, Daly's theory of separatism stresses the exorcism of false identities. She writes: Crone-logically prior to all discussion of political separatism from or within groups is the basic task of paring away the layers of false selves from the Self ... It is Crone-logical to conclude that internal separation or separatism, i.e., paring away, burning away the false selves encasing the Self, is the core of all authentic separations and thus is normative for all personal/political decisions about acts/forms of separatism.[102]

Women's decisions as to whether to withdraw their presence and energies from patriarchal structures, and even from some or most males, must be taken as part of a feminist disengagement from male-defined values and response patterns. For the 'unity' of women's experience is disrupted in as much as women suffer a duality of consciousness between their selves and their social roles. Separatism, in Daly's sense, is so effective because it means confronting the externalised structures and internalised images of patriarchy that have disabled women politically and have hindered our capacity to participate fully in history.

Moreover, as Daly acknowledges, the extent to which one engages in separatism, and the kinds of acts defined thereunder, is contingent upon many factors in a woman's life. Thus women who embrace separatism do so each in their own way, and in keeping with the conditions and rhythms of their own, irreducible personal 'Life Times'. Commenting on this phenomenon Daly writes:

> It should not be too surprising that women with fiercely focused feminist consciousness have widely differentiated interests. A woman who is known as a 'separatist', for example, may have friendly communication with some men, without any compromise of her integrity. She may read, with profit, male-authored books, using these as re-sources for her own original analysis ... She is not particularly chagrined at this seeming inconsistency - although it may cause her to grin and cackle quietly to herSelf. Unity in complexity is, after all, a far-out phenomenon.[103]

The separatist then may sometimes choose to stay in contact with men or to hold positions within patriarchal institutions (as, for example, Daly chooses to remain a faculty member in Boston College).

'correct' sense. She employs the lower case 'l' 'when referring to the male-distorted version reflected in the media', that is, those more aequately named 'gay' or 'female homosexual...who, although they relate genitally to women, give their allegience to men and male myths, ideologies, styles, practices, institutions, and professions'. Gyn/Ecology pp. 25-26.

102 Gyn/Ecology p.381.

103 Pure Lust p.421, n.3.

Secondly, whilst Daly's concept of separatism does suggest some level of withdrawal, this is not its primary focus. The emphasis of this definition is rather on the re-alignment of women's energy from patriarchy to women's selves. Women have been encouraged to mistrust each other historically. In liberation, Daly argues, women discover that the patriarchal conditioning that we receive, which teaches us not to value other women, to see other women as competition for men's attention, and later for men's protection, is destructive of our deepest selves. By contrast separatism empowers women in their quest for Selfhood. When women separate, and hence create power for ourselves, certain men are deprived of power they would otherwise have had, that is, their power over these particular women. But the women's power is not, as this analogy might appear to suggest, 'seized' from men, it is created by the women for ourselves. Indeed for Daly it is in the white heat of this connection that women can begin the task of re-inventing themselves, their structures, relationships and lifestyles anew.

To say that the politics of separatism centre on the connections between women is not, however, to say that men are left completely unaffected. Implicit in Daly's approach is the separatist conviction that patriarchal reality cannot continue to maintain itself once women withdraw their acquiescence. That women are rejecting the old methods and declaring themselves legitimate sources and 'centres' of 'reality' means that the whole patriarchal hierarchical order is brought into question. For who, it may then be asked, stands at the margins of what? Men will find themselves hard-pressed to convince themselves of their dominance over women if women refuse point blank to give credence and legitimacy to this absurd and obscene belief. It is in this sense that Daly regards women's experience to be the key to full human liberation.[104] In Beyond God the Father Daly analyses women's feminist experience in terms both of women's existential expansion and the subsequent impact upon men.[105] Drawing upon Woolf's metaphor of women as mirrors who project men's reflections back to them at twice their actual size, Daly argues that once men are denied the 'projection screens' provided by women, they will have to face an analogous and potentially redemptive experience of 'nothingness'. She writes:

> Men, looking out, would have to see real people out there. Rushing, terrified, inside again, what would they see? They would see the source of all the projections, like the dirty niggers, the narcissistic females, the Chicanos, the greedy Jews, the 'perverted' faggots and dykes, the

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104 Beyond God the Father pp.25, 42, 50.

105 Ibid., pp.41-42.

> dirty communists and all the 'under developed' Third World. And what would they do when they perceive that the enemy is themselves?[106]

In both Beyond God the Father and Gyn/Ecology, however, Daly plays down the liberatory potential of separatism for males. She argues that the call for 'human' liberation all too often fails to confront the depths of sexism at work in the most radical political movements and underestimates the ' polarization, tensions, risks, and pain' that are necessary steps on the road to justice for women.

To summarise Daly's argument: the logic of separatism is the logic of an unusual and potentially revolutionary choice, one which diverges from the choices made by the most radical of reformists. This choice involves a rejection of strategies that merely challenge the political system from within. For to issue a direct challenge to the system from 'inside' is effectively to bestow upon it some degree of legitimacy or plausibility. To 'separate' is, however, to do something different. Separatism does challenge the political system but it does so by refusing, as it were, to play the game: the separatist through her actions refuses to abide by the 'rules' and 'gameplan' established and legitimated in the current political regime for these are held in dispute.

As a strategy for social change Daly's theory of separatism is perhaps more flexible and nuanced than one might suppose. Certainly it is far removed from any idea of 'escapism' or of attaining some kind of feminist 'purity', as critics so often charge. The recognition that there is no 'pure' separatist space does not mean that acts of separatism have no impact upon the balance of power in patriarchy. For if it is true to say that 'patriarchy is everywhere' it is equally true to say, from Daly's perspective, that women are everywhere subverting and sabotaging it.

Does Daly's recommendation of separatism mean that all efforts at reforming the legal system and other social apparatus are redundant? Daly thinks that to dismiss the value of such struggles is simplistic. Whether men will change if women advance their claims for 'equality' in terms of 'reason' and/or 'mutual interest' remains a matter of debate. But at the very least we can say that there is in fact very little evidence to date to suggest that men will surrender the cultural privileges they currently enjoy. Indeed the contemporary explosion of institutionalised misogyny through media dissemination of pornography, the brutal realities for many women (and the omnipresent fear for the rest) of rape, and physical abuse suggest otherwise. Moreover evidence collected by feminists suggests that the (male) establishment has consistently engineered a 'backlash' against (Second-Wave) feminism and the improvements in (some) women's living conditions that it has brought.[107] Yet, even in her most radical 'separatist' book, Pure Lust, she maintains that it is not 'that women should not seek 'equal pay' or the "Equal Rights Amendment"'. For clearly, 'Such

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106 Daly 'Radical Feminism: The Spiritual Revolution' The Sophia Lyon Fahs Lecture.

measures may indeed lead to some relief of oppression and improve some conditions'.[108] However she counsels that 'One should not be misled by such misnomers. To believe that such changes will bring about real 'equality', while failing to understand the need for almost ineffable changes at the very heart of consciousness, is to settle for potted "justice"'.[109] What must be kept in mind here is the final aim of Daly (and others who advocate separatism). These women are not so interested in advancing the cause of women in society as we now know it, but in changing society (though they may not spurn all efforts at reform). Daly rejects all forms of hierarchy. Just what this would cash out as in terms of a vision of the good society is debatable, of course, and (like many other radical feminists on this point) Daly has little to say.

Certainly Daly's account of change and how it is to be effected diverges in many respects from mainstream 'liberal equality feminism' Significantly, she believes that women should exercise a healthy scepticism with regard to the goals of the struggle for sex-equality and, indeed, all mainstream political activity. Unlike 'liberal equality feminists' who wish to be treated like men and justify it on the grounds of 'androgyny' (women's 'adequate similarity' to men: the idea that there are no socially significant differences between men and women that merit any form of sex-discrimination) she is relatively uninterested in achieving 'equality of opportunity'. This may not be as reactionary as it appears, for 'equality of opportunity' in liberal equality feminism may simply mean equality of opportunity in an élitist or stratified society. Moreover, the public-private split is reinforced by such feminists' emphasis upon action in the public sphere, often with the onset of the 'double' or even 'triple' shift for many working women. Daly, on the other hand, is concerned with the more radical idea of abolishing oppression in all its forms. For Daly, simply granting women access to what contemporary men have access to - academia, the professions, blue collar work, the military - will not give them the power they need to solve the fundamental problem, which goes far deeper than social benefits and employment opportunities. As we have seen for her the feminist imperative is to reclaim the 'energy "stolen" from women' in order they women may be self-determining, rather than they be 'equal' (in the sense of sameness) with men.

The kind of separatist practice Daly proposes is inherently political, though it is undoubtedly problematic to link Daly's scheme, as some critics do, to more conventional concepts of social change or 'revolution'. In her book Contemporary Feminist Thought Hester Eisenstein includes Daly's work under the rubric of 'cultural feminism' which, she writes (in the past tense) 'eschewed an explicit political or economic program altogether and concentrated on the development of a

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107 See Susan Faludi Backlash (N.Y.: Crown, 1991).

108 Pure Lust p.221.

109 Ibid.

separate women's culture'.[110] Such criticisms completely miss the radical feminist idea that the creation of 'womanspace' is a profoundly political act in itself.To castigate Daly's avowal of separatism because it does not fit in to what is conventionally termed 'political action' is fundamentally wrong-headed, for she makes no pretence at offering women such a proposal. Indeed, her understanding of separatism is founded upon the perceived necessity of rejecting reformism because it does nothing to tackle the question of oppression *per se*.

One of the most important ways in which Daly thinks that women can begin to create new value is through the adoption of a 'Lesbian' position.This is the fifth and final feature of Daly's radical feminist theory that I shall discuss. In the Wickedary Daly defines Lesbian as: 'n: a Woman-Loving woman: one who has rejected false loyalties to men in every sphere'.[111] Here we can see that Daly's definition of the Lesbian encompasses both aspects of separatism, that is, withdrawal of energy from males, and the primacy of female community. For Daly the Lesbian is a model for feminist praxis; a concept which conjures a 'community of female be-ing', a fund of ethical and political possibilities. In her writings to identify as a Lesbian includes the recognition that one's identity as a woman is not defined primarily by one's relation to a male world and male traditions but that powerful bonds between women are a crucial factor in one's life. The Lesbian is also a model of creative autonomy in her work.[112] She cross references 'Lesbian' with 'Amazon', a 'Labrys-wielding Female Warrior who Sees and Names phallic deception, cutting through the layers of lies intended to baffle Journeyers'.[113] Another synonym for Lesbian is 'Spinster': 'A woman whose occupation is to Spin, to participate in the whirling movement of creation; one who has chosen her Self, who defines her Self by choice neither in relation to children nor to men; one who is Self-identified; a whirling dervish, Spiralling in New Time/Space'.[114] This is interesting in as much as it challenges the conventional metaphors for creativity - lover, androgyne, mother - all of which exclude lesbian sexuality and privilege heterosexuality. In privileging the category 'Lesbian' in this way Daly makes the point that female-identified sexuality is good and positive and therefore crucial to redrawing the parameters of female autonomy and creativity.

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110 Eisenstein, Hester, op. cit., p.xx.

111 The Wickedary p.78.

112 See also Adrienne Rich 'It is the Lesbian in us...' inOn Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-78 (N.Y.: Norton, 1979) pp. 111-202; and Monique Wittig The Lesbian Body translated by David le Vay (N.Y.: Avon, 1975).

113 The Wickedary p.105.

114 Ibid., p.167.

Daly has not always held the same view of Lesbianism. In Beyond God the Father, for instance, she maintains that feminists should refuse to accept the sexual categories of either 'heterosexuality' or 'homosexuality' (which here includes Lesbianism). She writes: 'The point should be not merely to deny that one is a lesbian, in the sense of withdrawing oneself from a category which remains uncriticized, or on the other hand merely to defiantly box oneself in this category, but rather to criticize and exorcize the label itself, which in fact makes sense only within the mad world of phallic categories'.[115] This view is somewhat at odds with lesbian political writings of the early seventies which argued that lesbians suffered a greater degree of oppression than other women and that lesbian 'invisibility' as a group (even within the women's movement)was indicative of their taboo status.

In Gyn/Ecology , however, it becomes clear that her views on Lesbianism have altered dramatically. She abandons the term 'homosexuality' which, it is implied, is qualitatively different to 'Lesbianism'. Daly now speaks of Lesbianism in terms of 'separatism' and 'gynocentric be-ing' rather than simply in terms of sexual preference.[116] Similarly, in Pure Lust, she argues that, in patriarchal society, there exists a 'Total Taboo against Women-Touching women'.[117] Daly uses 'Touching' here in a broad sense rather than restricting its use to 'physical contact' (though it will encompass that meaning).[118] In both of these works Lesbianism is seen as a choice rather than a genetic predisposition. Moreover, it is a choice that most or all women can make. Daly dedicates Gyn/Ecology to 'the Lesbian Imagination in All Women.'[119] Thus the implications of Daly's concept of Lesbianism extend beyond the parameters of those women who already identify themselves as Lesbians. for she believes that there is the potentiality within every woman to expand and intensify her relations with other women to the point that the term Lesbian becomes appropriate. The manner and degree to which each woman will actualise this potential, however, depends upon her Self alone. It is, as Daly acknowledges: 'For each individual Journeyer to decide/expand the scope of this [Lesbian] imagination within her. It is she, and she alone, who can determine how far, and in what way, she will/can travel. She, and she alone, can dis-cover the mystery of her own history, and find how it is interwoven with the lives of other women'.[120]

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115 Beyond God the Father p.126

116 Gyn/Ecology 'Preface' p.xlviii.

117 Pure Lust p.250.

118 Ibid.

119 Ibid., p.xlix This phrase is the subtitle of the feminist journal Sinister Wisdom.

120 Ibid.

This formulation of lesbian being owes much to Adrienne Rich's influential concept of a 'lesbian continuum', ranging from those who may be in relationships with men but have emotional ties to other women, to those with full emotional, sexual and political commitment to women. For Rich Lesbianism is about more than sexual preference, it blossoms forth from a primary woman-identification. Following Rich's example Daly seeks to remove Lesbianism from its position as an issue of 'sexuality' alone, a position into which it has been placed by theological, medical and social scientific discourse. The word 'lesbian' did not come into usage until the mid-nineteenth century. Before that time terms such as 'invert', 'tribades' or 'fricatrices' were employed as part of the theological rhetoric of 'unnatural lust'. This rhetoric of course owes directly to Christian moral theology in which non-procreative sexual pleasure was deemed 'sinful' and 'against the natural order of things'. The definition of lesbians in the medical terminology of 'pathology' was pioneered by Edward Carpenter in his book Love's Coming of Age[121] and Havelock Ellis in his seven-volume Studies in the Psychology of Sex. Ellis - who was influential in forming British opinion on these issues - distinguished between 'true' and 'pseudo-inverts'. Ellis' followers were the sex reformers Stella Browne and Marie Stopes, the latter of which wrote Enduring Passion (1923). In these manuals lesbianism was portrayed as a deviant form of sexuality, an 'abnormal' sexual orientation. Carpenter - who was himself homosexual - sought to poetry homosexuals not as inferior but simply different. However in doing so he lumped Lesbians with homosexuals and called them an 'Intermediate Sex'.[122] Carpenter believed that a small number of women and men were 'congenitally deviant' in this way. Kraft-Ebing in *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) however was less reticent. He also thought homosexuality and Lesbianism were also congenital, but tended to associate them with an inherited disposition to degeneration and vice (like other perversions).

In contrast to the medical tradition Daly warns feminists against sexualising Lesbianism *per se* as it both trivialises and depoliticises it as a form of woman-bonding. She writes: only 'if violation of the Total Taboo encompasses and transcends the sexual sphere' are women enabled to 'Touch and Move'.[123] She goes on to criticise the currently fashionable 'gay', 'social club, sexually liberated lesbianism' that is 'disseminated in the popular media, in pornography, and in pseudo-Lesbian books, magazines, graphics, films, and videos'[124] as an offshoot of so-called 'sexual revolution' of the sixties, itself a product of phallocratic culture. Drawing upon Herbert Marcuse's theory of 'sexual desublimation Daly writes: 'The reduction of potentially powerful, gynergizing

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121 Carpenter, Edward Love's Coming of Age(London: Methuen, 1906).

122 Carpenter, op. cit., p.124.

123 Pure Lust p.253.

124 The Wickedary p.68.

connections between women to only the sexual sphere in a climate of patriarchal permissiveness that would restrict women to this male-defined "sexual deviance" is...only repressive desublimation. "Liberated" women who are merely "gay" remain bound libidinally to the institutionalized fathers'.[125] This restriction of Lesbian being is ultimately politically reactionary. To sexualise Lesbianism is inevitably to reduce it, to stunt its revolutionary potential because it may obscure the political consequences of the primary bonding of woman with each other. It also obfuscates the nature of women's bonding with males who are, in Daly's radical feminist discourse, the oppressor 'class'. (As Coralyn Fontaine writes: 'the sexualization of lesbianism simultaneously hides the political nature of heterosexuality').[126] Indeed it may well be that in political terms the Lesbian occupies a privileged position in that she is able to see the pervasiveness of heterosexism.

In the Wickedary Daly draws upon Janice Raymond's terms 'hetero-reality' and 'hetero-relations' to describe the nature of this institution. 'Hetero-reality' connotes 'the world view that woman exists always in relation to man';[127] whilst hetero-relations' are 'the wide range of affective, social, political, and economic relations that are ordained between men and women by men'.[128] Heterosexuality is then the set of values and structures that assumes heterosexuality to be the only natural form of sexual and emotional expression. Building upon Frye's contention that male access to females is 'the patriarchal imperative', Daly argues that women constitute a 'Touchable Caste'.[129] Women are 'touchable by those who are in possession of a penis...all women in patriarchy are touchable by males and have no acknowledged right to refuse this role, for this is *the* role of women and nature within the phallocratic caste system'.[130] What is distinctive about Daly's approach is that she views hetero-reality as merely the foil for homo-reality in which men get the sustenance they need (and do not get from other males) from women. Whilst hetero-standards are promoted by what Gramsci called the 'ideological state apparatus' (family, church, schools, state) what really supports patriarchy, Daly says, is male power bonding. In patriarchal society male bonding is primary (the Trinity symbolises this), also the exchange of women by and amongst men. This

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125 Pure Lust p.253.

126 Fontaine, 'Teaching the Psychology of Women'in Margaret Cruikshank (ed.) Lesbian Studies (N.Y.: The Feminist Press, 1982), p.74.For an insightful analysis of the possible parameters of the meaning of 'sex' for Lesbians see Marilyn Frye 'Lesbian "Sex"'inWillful Virgin: Essays in Feminism 1976-1992 (Freedom, California: The Crossing Press, 1992), pp.109-119.

127 Raymond, Janice A Passion for Friends (Boston: Beacon, 1986) p.3.; cit.The Wickedary p.205.

128 Raymond, op. cit., p.7; cit. The Wickedary p.78.

129 Pure Lust pp.232.

130 Ibid.

bonding though it has an erotic component is made more effective by virtue of the fact that it is concealed and denied.[131]

In arguing that the full expression of women's community with each other is stymied by the political institution of heterosexism Daly is part of a now well-established tradition of Lesbian theory.[132] Early radical feminists concentrated upon love as a dangerous delusion that was used as method of enslaving women. This discussion gave way to discussions revolving around the politics of sexuality. The preliminary analysis of heterosexuality as a 'political institution',[133] which must be maintained by the repression or stigmatising of those who challenge it, was formulated by Charlotte Bunch in 'Learning from Lesbian Separatism' in the feminist magazine Ms. in November 1976. But this was taken further by Anglo-American women, including Daly, who began to move towards the creation of new Lesbian values in Lesbian communities. 1980 saw a notable contribution to the debate from Adrienne Rich in her article 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence'. For Rich heterosexuality is 'something that has to be imposed, managed, organized, propagandized and maintained by force'. In its argument that male supremacy has been bolstered by institutional heterosexuality, as well as sex role conditioning and economic privilege, it remains the classic statement of heterosexuality as political institution.

It has been noted that Daly's position in a sense makes all women Lesbian and erases the real oppression and hardship experienced by those women whose orientation to other women was primarily sexual. Moreover Daly's position must not be taken as indicative of all lesbians. Not all lesbians agree in their choice of value system, (though significantly all those who espouse 'a lesbian perspective are united in their understanding of lesbianism as what Sarah Hoagland calls 'a starting point of denial and resistance').[134] Hoagland, for example, refuses to define the term. She writes: 'To define "lesbian" is, in my opinion, to succumb to a context of heterosexualism. No one ever feels compelled to explain or define what they perceive as the norm. If we define "lesbianism", we invoke a context in which it is not the norm'.[135] There are, then, many questions regarding the 'Lesbian' identity that Daly leaves unanswered. Is one born a Lesbian? Have there been Lesbians at every

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131 Gyn/Ecology p.63

132 See Bryson op. cit., p.213ff

133 Lillian Faderman uses the term 'heterocentrism; Janice G. Raymond employs 'hetero-reality' or 'heteropatriarchy'; Adrienne Rich uses 'compulsory heterosexuality'; and Sarah Hoagland's preferred term is 'totalitarian heterosexuality'. Cit. Cruikshank op. cit., p.xiii.

134 Hoagland, Sarah 'Introduction' to Penelope op. cit., p.xii.

135 Hoagland, Sarah Lucia Lesbian Ethics: Toward New Value (Palo Alto, Calif.: Institute of Lesbian Studies, 1988), p.8.

period in history? Or is the concept of the Lesbian socially constructed? Which is to say, was the 'emergence' of the Lesbian as a social category linked to a particular set of social conditions?[136]

For Daly Lesbianism is definitely a choice. I support this view. Coming out as a Lesbian woman involves both discovery and creation. As Joyce Trebilcot writes: 'The experience is one of Acknowledging, of realizing what is already there, and at the same time of creating something new, a new sense of oneself, a new identity'.[137] A woman *can* decide to become Lesbian because she has influence over her feelings and her sensual-emotional experience. Trebilcot writes: 'Many women who want to experience lesbian sexuality in fact do reorient their feelings in terms of this desire; they teach themselves - usually, no doubt, with the help of other women - to have lesbian feelings'.[138] Thus it clearly is possible 'To understand... heterosexual identity not as a fate irrevocably determined by genital sensations, but as a choice... made on the basis of a variety of factors, a choice pushed upon [us], to be sure, by the power of the institution of heterosexuality, but also one which [we] might not have made and might yet revoke'.[139] Curiously, the element of choice in one's present and future sexual orientation - clearly discernible in Daly's writings - has received relatively little attention from feminist commentators, including feminist theologians. The same applies to the related issue of heterosexuality as a political institution. This is regrettable. For heterosexuality has had consequences in terms of the material realities of women' lives. Heterosexuality is a whole cultural universe that is legitimated by rituals, histories, art, literature and religious and social ideology. Fundamentally, heterosexuality has meant 'men first'. It has led to the assumption that every woman is defined by and is the property of men. Thus women's oppression is clearly bound up with the institution of heterosexuality both in the work place (where many women still receive second-rate wages on the assumption that they are tied to men) and in the home (because heterosexuality upholds the family as an economic and personal unit). Changing women's place in our society therefore means engaging the structures of heterosexism.[140] This is clearly difficult for many women to perceive. It is perhaps understandable in as much as 'heterosexual privilege' reveals that women have a real stake in male supremacy in so far as it keeps us (relatively) safe and (relatively) secure.

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136 For a critique of Foucault's influential history of sexuality (which largely ignores lesbianism) see Penelope Call Me Lesbian pp.25-27.

137 Trebilcot, Joyce Dyke Ideas p.100.

138 Ibid., p.105.

139 Ibid., p.107.

140 For substantive research on the material consequences of hetersexuality for women see Gill Dunne 'Difference at Work: Perceptions of Work from a Non-Heterosexual Perspective' in Working Out: New Directions for Women's Studies ed. Hilary Hinds, Ann Phoenix and Jackey Stacey (London: Falmer 1992).

In this chapter I have briefly discussed five selected features of Daly's radical feminist theory. Whilst the analysis provided is by no means exhaustive I hope to have highlighted several areas in which Daly's contribution to the radical feminist corpus has been marked, and several in which she has simply extended the analysis of previous radical feminist thinkers. This has laid bare some of the deep theoretical differences that exist within the radical feminist movement, as well as between feminists of competing theoretical approaches. Such diversity is not necessarily a drawback. Different analytic priorities throw up different findings. This can have positive political effects. For example, though it has been much criticised in recent years the shared radical feminist emphasis upon the common bonds between women has brought forth a vibrant women's culture in the United States. An effective rejoinder to the practitioners of what I have called the politics of representation with regard to radical feminist theory, then, might focus upon the elasticity of feminist theoretical positions. Critiques which focus upon Daly as a pre-eminent representative of an ideal type 'radical feminism' tend to gloss over the ambiguities and complexities of 'lived' politics. For example, feminists of all persuasions find themselves within institutional contexts fighting for change (such as fighting for the criminalisation of rape within marriage). This reality complicates the previously drawn distinctions.

This chapter has also served to introduce the political philosophical rationale behind the suspicion of male-engendered theory across the disciplines that conditions Daly's writings from Beyond God the Father onwards. It is to an examination of four such theoretical frameworks that the remainder of the thesis will be devoted.

Chapter 2: Existentialism

In this chapter I propose to examine several aspects of the relationship between Mary Daly's feminist theory and the existentialist feminist thought of Simone de Beauvoir. The research presented here is intended as a contribution to the history of feminist ideas. Both de Beauvoir and Daly have been influential in mapping out the contours of second wave feminist theoretical activity in the respective fields of philosophy and theology. Like other feminists Daly acknowledges a debt to de Beauvoir for her pioneering work The Second Sex. Moreover in her first feminist work, The Church and the Second Sex, Daly draws directly upon de Beauvoir's analysis of women's situation, particularly upon her description of the role played by the Roman Catholic Church in oppression. De Beauvoir's attack on the Church set a precedent which feminists such as Daly later followed to great theological effect. Negative critiques of religion existed before The Second Sex, of course, but de Beauvoir's study was the first to put forward in detail the way in which religion functions in concert with other social agencies to maintain the social dynamics of male dominance/female subordination.

The importance of the task of unravelling the connections between Daly's writings and The Second Sex is not limited to the history of feminist ideas. There are deeper philosophical issues to be considered that may affect the viability of Daly's contribution *qua feminist* theory. As a number of contemporary feminist scholars have demonstrated, serious structural problems attach to any feminist appropriation of Sartrean existentialist philosophy.[1] In particular, the dichotomy of transcendence-immanence that is central to Beauvoir's account of woman as the Other is inextricably connected, in Sartre's existentialist thought, with the category of sex. The question that arises is as follows: in drawing upon The Second Sex does Daly re-produce its major *philosophical* positions and, if so, does she also inadvertently reinscribe Sartre's negative assumptions regarding the female sex? At least one commentator answers this question in the affirmative.[2]

I was able to raise the question of the relationship between Daly's feminist thought and existentialism in a conversation with Daly at her home in Newton Center, Massachusetts. I asked

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[1] Gatens, Moira Feminism and Philosophy: Perspectives on Difference and Equality (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995) p.51; Nancy Hartsock Money, Sex and Power (N.Y: Longmans, 1983), p. 286; Anne Whitmarsh Simone de Beauvoir and The Limits of Commitment (Cambridge: C. U. P., 1981), p.150.

her about the extent to which her own work has been shaped through an encounter with de Beauvoir's existentialist feminism. To my surprise, Daly denied ever having been influenced by existentialism. I was left feeling somewhat perplexed. I was aware of the reticence, on Daly's part, to dwell upon those thinkers whose work had facilitated the formation of her own theory. Whenever I attempted to probe the question of her intellectual influences, however, she dismissed my inquiry with the statement that 'Nature' was the primary source and matrix of her thought. Any interest in exploring the relation between her writings and established intellectual frameworks, she intimated, was 'bore-ing' (penetrating and invasive - the implication is - like a male) and symptomatic of 'Academentia' (a condition afflicting intellectuals that is characterised by an obsession with irrelevant minutiae to the detriment of larger questions).[3] In the end I dropped this particular line of questioning. Later, however, I began to investigate the matter further by turning to Daly's self-confessed 'dialogue' with de Beauvoir in The Church and the Second Sex. The questions that I sought to address in my examination of this work were as follows. Is Daly's agreement with de Beauvoir's analysis of the situation of women in The Second Sex suggestive of a much closer tie with existentialism than that afforded by the general intellectual *Zeitgeist*? In particular, is there evidence to show that Sartrean[4] existentialist ideas and assumptions were mediated to Daly through her reading of The Second Sex? The argument that I shall put forward in response to these questions is structured in the following way.

Firstly, I shall seek to clarify which elements of The Second Sex Daly takes up and develops in her own writings. I shall argue that, in substantive terms, de Beauvoir's legacy to Daly consists principally in the functionalist criticism of the historic role of the Church in the oppression of women. One critic argues that Daly also assimilates the critique of gender stereotypes that is founded, for de Beauvoir, upon existentialist philosophical assumptions and that this then makes Daly's theory problematic from a feminist perspective. I shall take issue with this claim, though I do not wish to rebuff the argument entirely. The argument that I shall defend is that, whilst Daly shares Beauvoir's conclusions regarding the destructiveness of the ideology of femininity, the philosophical route by which she arrives at these conclusions is not the same as that travelled by de Beauvoir. For

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2 Korte, Anne-Marie *Een Pasie voor transcendentie: Feministe theologie en moderniteit in her denke van Mary Daly* (English abstract).

3 For Daly's definition of 'Academentia' see the Wickedary p. 184. C.f. Daly's profile of 'Prof. Y' in the 'Cat/egorial Imperative' Pure Lust pp.412-415.

4 For the argumunt that Beauvoir in contributed far more than is sometimes thought to the formation of existentialism, specifically that 'Sartrean existentialism is really Beauvoirian existentialism', see Edward Fullbrook 'Beauvoir: the Mother of Existentialism' The Times Higher (December 3, 1993). This article encapsulates the central thesis of the book Fullbrook co-authors with Kate Fullbrook entitled Simone de

de Beauvoir, the assertions that there are no immutable 'nature(s)' and that, to all intents and purposes, 'woman[5] is the product of social conditioning, derive from her existentialist philosophical assumptions; for Daly, however, the same conclusions are arrived at by working from an altogether different ontological base: one provided for Daly by the Thomism in which she had trained.

My second task will be to develop the last point further. The apparent contiguities between Daly and de Beauvoir's feminism should not deceive us into assuming that Daly's work is thereby stamped indelibly by the alleged 'masculinist' presuppositions that pervade de Beauvoir's existentialist thought. I have argued that Daly finds certain aspects of de Beauvoir's theory useful in illuminating the situation of women both in the Church and in wider society, her views diverge from those of the French writer on the most fundamental feminist philosophical questions. In order to illustrate this further - and thereby vindicate the position mapped out above - I shall distil each writer's response to the two fundamental questions that informThe Second Sex, namely: 'What is woman?' and 'Why is woman the Other?'. I shall endeavour to show that Daly differs from Beauvoir both with regard to working assumptions and to her approach to the problem of women's oppression and the strategies women may adopt in order to liberate themselves. As a result of this analysis it will, I hope, become evident that Daly does not simply re-produce Beauvoir's theory of the Other. On the contrary, I shall contend that Daly may be read as taking up a critical posture relative to Beauvoir's existentialist feminism, especially with regard to her theory of female Otherness.

Thirdly, and finally, I turn to engage with an important critique of Daly's work by the Australian feminist Meaghan Morris. In a review of Daly's rhetorical practice Morris unveils the presence, in Daly's writing, of a symbolics of Otherness in which certain 'good' women are rhetorically pitted in battle against other 'bad' women and all males; the latter functioning in Daly's writings as the 'Other' over and against whom she (and other 'Amazon' women) must prevail. Morris argues that a 'structural necessity FOR a symbol of the Other' is part and parcel of Daly's politics in a manner analogous to the structural requirement for an Other in Sartre's existentialism.[6] Whilst Morris does not explicitly attribute Daly's compulsion towards the setting up of an 'Other' to her appropriation of Beauvoir (indeed she does not account for its origins) her criticisms threaten the

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Beauvoir and Jean Paul Sartre: The Remaking of a Legend (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993).

5 Beauvoir, following Sartre, speaks only of 'woman' in the abstract singular, indeed of 'woman' as she is categorised by men, instead of the concrete plural 'women' which alone can form the starting point for a coherent feminist theory which is faithful to the diverse experiences of women across diverse spatio-temporal locations.

6 Morris cites Michèle Le Doeuff who argues that the infamous imagery of 'holes and slime' in Sartre's philosophy represents the 'counter-figure' that is essential to the existentialist framework. See Meaghan Morris The Pirate's Fiancée: Feminism, Reading, Postmodernism (London: Verso, 1988) p.45. For Le Doeuff's position see *L'Imaginaire philosophique* (Paris: Payot, 1980).

interpretation of Daly's work that I have put forward. In response to Morris I acknowledge a disposition in Daly's textual practice to construct an 'Other' or 'Others', but argue that there may be cogent political reasons to account for such a *strategy in certain circumstances*. Fundamentally, however, this tendency does not amount to a 'structural necessity' in Daly's work. Indeed, it could be argued that the predilection to situate other groups as Other to feminism is fundamentally anomalous, rather than consistent, with her fundamental ontology.

Let us begin then by identifying those elements in The Second Sex that have been taken up and developed by Daly in her feminist writings. The primary resource will be The Church and the Second Sex for it is here that Daly considers de Beauvoir's feminist theory qua existentialist theory. As the argument develops, however, I shall have cause to refer to Daly's later writings in order to illustrate that her position with regard to de Beauvoir's existentialist philosophical grid remains the same throughout her career.

In The Church and the Second Sex Daly is careful to distance herself from de Beauvoir's philosophical apparatus. What is appropriated is not the existentialist framework, but certain empirical features of de Beauvoir's analysis which Daly uses as a base from which to conduct her own research. Of particular importance is the functionalist analysis of the Church. Daly's response to de Beauvoir's criticism of the Church is to put to one side the philosophical issues that divide them and to concentrate instead upon the task of gathering 'empirical' data to see whether the charges that de Beauvoir levels against the Church are borne out by the historical facts. Her research is extensive, embracing the areas of biblical history and interpretation, ecclesiastical sociology, the history of theology, and papal history.

The first aspect of de Beauvoir's functionalist criticism of religion is the role of deception in masking oppression. De Beauvoir argues that the Church has always opposed measures designed to alleviate the suffering of women, such as improvements in their legal status, because the preservation of a male-dominated Church hierarchy *requires* women to be socially subordinate. In order to disguise this oppressive situation she contends that the Church masks or disguises it by using various strategies designed to deceive women; for example, by distracting women's attention away from their situation through the promise of a reward for their sufferings in the afterlife. As an atheist de Beauvoir considers the idea of an afterlife to be false, yet it has functioned so as to reinforce the prevailing (and unjust) social arrangements by encouraging female compliance to the rules laid down by the male-dominated Church. This, in turn, reinforces

the tendency for women to remain politically passive.[7] Another example of deception is the Church's promotion of the idea that 'equality' is already achieved in the eyes of God. To de Beauvoir this kind of equality (if it exists) is 'insubstantial' since women are still despised by men as sexual beings. But again what matters is not whether the belief is true (in the sense that it has any correspondence with reality) but rather what effect the belief has in social and political terms. For de Beauvoir the idea is powerful in the sense that when a woman internalises such a belief her energy is affected: potential rebellion is stifled by the suggestion that, in the most important respects, there is nothing to fight for since equality is already established. Women's perception of their lot may also be affected by the way in which 'woman' is exalted symbolically by the Church at the same time that she is socially humiliated by her subservience to 'man'. This tendency to exalt women to an unrealistic level, she argues, stems partly from the guilt that men experience at the benefits that they derive from women's subordination and partly from the desire in men to bestow a 'high' status on those things that they 'conquer' and 'possess'. It is therefore another form of male self-glorification.[8]

The second aspect of de Beauvoir's reproach of the Church is her criticism of dogmas that tacitly affirm the idea that women are inferior to men. In particular, she interprets the 'displacement' relation, in the Jewish and Christian traditions, of the cultof the ancient mother-goddess by a symbolic regime centred around the father-son as an attempt to break the symbolic potency of the maternal aspect of female existence. As de Beauvoir writes: 'It was as Mother that woman was fearsome; it is in maternity that she must be transfigured and enslaved'.[9] In Roman Catholicism the symbol of Mary has been effectively stripped of symbolic power for women. In the myth and art of the Virgin Mother - in which Mary is depicted kneeling in subjection before her own son, receiving her glory from him - we witness the symbolic humiliation of the maternal. By encouraging women to identify with Mary, de Beauvoir argues, the Church leads women into a state of self-abnegation and servility before their men.

The third aspect of Beauvoir's treatment of the Church is the criticism of moral theology. The Church is, she argues, fundamentally antisex, and hatred and fear of the body is linked to misogyny, for it is not the human body that is reviled but only that of the woman. 'The flesh that is for the Christian the hostile Other', de Beauvoir writes, 'is precisely woman. In her the Christian

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7 Ibid., p.58; c.f. Simone de Beauvoir The Second Sex translated and edited by H. M. Parshley (London: Pan Books Ltd, 1988; originally published in France as *Le Deuxieme Sexe*: *Librairie Gallimard*, 1949), p.633f.

8 Ibid, p. 60.

9 De Beauvoir op. cit., p.203; cit. The Church and the Second Sex p.61.

finds incarnated the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil'.[10] Other aspects of moral theology which de Beauvoir considers unjust are the Church's prohibition of abortion, contraception and its discouragement of gainful employment for women. Women are, as a result, effectively enslaved to their biological functions in an era when the advancement of technology has provided both women and men with means by which to liberate themselves from this bondage. Behind all of these Christian policies, de Beauvoir argues, lies the cultural amalgam of Hebrew tradition and Greek philosophy. Christianity emerged from the womb of Judaism - itself the product of a patriarchal culture - and the notion of female sinfulness and inferiority that emerged from the Jewish tradition was ratified by the insights of Scholastic/Aristotelian biology and the Aristotelian philosophy of fixed natures. The coalescence of these ideas meant that women's place in the order of society was transposed into the order of nature. Female 'nature' was thus fixed and moreover fixed in a subordinate position relative to male 'nature'.

The fourth and final aspect of de Beauvoir's feminist criticism of the Church is her assault upon discrimination against women in the Church hierarchy. She criticises the Church for prohibiting women entry into the ecclesiasiastical offices. This exclusion generates concrete feelings of inferiority in girls and women in the Church for no matter what talents and merits they may possess they can never identify with authoritative figures in the Church. The masculinity of these figures is moreover bolstered by identification with divinity itself, which is also seen as male. There may even be some confusion between the priest/confessor and God himself; the mediator blurs into the mediated - the male is god.[11]

In The Church and the Second Sex Daly agrees with de Beauvoir about the political impact of women holding such beliefs in a male-dominated society.[12] Following de Beauvoir, Daly argues that women have become subject to a process by which they have been coerced into internalising male projections of themselves and thence to acting out such 'predestined' roles. The Church has, she argued, played a major role in this coercion. With the help of modern Catholic literature, the Church has woven a mythology of the 'eternal feminine'around women. In this body of literature 'the Eternal Woman' is said to possess, in Daly's words:'A vocation to surrender and hiddeness; hence the symbol of the veil. Self-less, she achieves not individual realization but merely generic fulfilment in motherhood, physical or spiritual (the wife is always a "mother to her husband" as well as to her children). She is said to be timeless and conservative by nature. She is shrouded in

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10 De Beauvoir op. cit., p.199; cit Daly The Church and the Second Sex p.63.

11 c.f.: The Church and the Second Sex p.65-66

12 The Church and the Second Sex p.71.

"mystery", because she is not recognized as a genuine person'.[13] These stereotypical roles, Daly argues, effectively destroy the virtues of intellectual independence, the ability to disassociate ourselves from others, 'dominance' and 'initiative' which both Daly ande Beauvoir see to be necessary for creativity and productivity to flourish. Instead of fostering these virtues, women have been encouraged instead to think of themselves in wholly and exclusively relational terms. (The role of mother, for instance -in both a physical and a spiritual sense - has been seen to encapsulate the 'essence' of what it means to be a woman). The continued imposition of the role of the Eternal Feminine upon women is, she maintains, holding up the course of human evolution. It is, she writes, 'the enemy of the individual woman looking for ... creative expansion of her own unique personhood'.[14]

It is not only women, however, who suffer from sexual stereotyping; the humanity of men is correspondingly diminished. The Eternal Masculine - the counterpart and complement to the mythic Eternal Feminine - traps males in the perversity of roles which emphasise a maschismo ethos: strength without gentleness, courage without compassion and rationality cut off from due deference to proper ends. Moreover the fostering of such models hinders the possibility for what Daly calls 'genuine complementarity and personal encounter' between men and women. Men look at women in vain for a life partner, for real partnership is short-circuited by the destructive dynamics of discrimination and oppression which leave women in a state of subjection and utter dependence.

With respect to the criticism of moral theology - abortion, contraception. Daly concurs with de Beauvoir's criticism ofharmful moral teachings which she analyses in terms of an amalgam of Greek philosophy with Hebraic myth. Such teachings have promoted the legitimacy of female subordination. In Aquinas' philosophy, for example, the idea of immutable essences as this had been promulgated by Aristotle, was coupled with the old biological claims that the female element was passive during the process of reproduction. The female was said to provide only the inert matter, whilst the semen issuing from the male was said to provide the active form that made the child what it was. Female children in this scheme were taken to be, quite simply, deviants from the norm set by nature. Taken together with the ancient Biblical stories of the origins of the human species and of the special female susceptibility to, and culpability for, sin these ideas 'made it seem that the sociological fact of women's subordination was ascribed in the heavens'.[15]

Daly agrees with the French writer that, whilst religion has been an important factor in the perpetuation of female social subordination, that state is not caused directly or solely by religion.

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13 Ibid., p.149.
14 Ibid., p.150.
15 Ibid., p. 63.

Oppression is a result of 'convergent influences'; its dynamics are complex, subtle and interweaving. The Church is, she writes in The Church and the Second Sex, only 'one factor in the complex context of patriarchal structures, of which it is both product and perpetrator. Rather than being *the* cause of women's unfortunate condition, religion appears rather as a superstructure, as an instrument of oppression and deception appropriate to a culture with given thought-patterns'.[16] It is the ethical duty of women, according to both writers, to refuse to acquiesce in the grand deception anymore, to cast off the docility which has clothed them for so long and to assume the mantle of adulthood that is now properly theirs.

In Daly's later writings de Beauvoir's idea of the Mary image as the usurper of the ancient symbol of the mother goddess is developed. She deconstructs the image of the meek and compliant *theotokos* as a masochistic model for women to follow.[17] The image of Mary is 'bland and monolithic'.[18] It epitomises the 'state of perfect femininity'.[19] Marian dogma is attacked as an assault upon women. The dogma of the Virgin Birth is reread as a prototypal rape of the Goddess in which 'female presence' is replaced by 'male femininity'[20]; the Assumption depicts the 'rehabilitation' of the Goddess through her defeat and humiliation before her Son; and the Immaculate Conception becomes one of the strategies of tokenism.[21] With de Beauvoir she recognises that the Church is not the only proponent of the maschismo ideology that adversely affects women and men. Advertising, the media (particularly women's magazines), education and psychological theory (e.g. Freud's idea of 'penis-envy') are all sources for the Eternal Feminine syndrome. Nevertheless the Church is an 'especially potent' vehicle for this ideology, Daly suggests, because 'it surrounds itself with an aura of alleged divine approval'.[22] The subjugation of women thus comes to be seen as part of 'the divine plan'. She later uses this kind of analysis to great effect as part of her continuing criticism of Christianity.[23]

A significant difference in the two writers' approaches is that, unlike de Beauvoir who is predominantly critical of religion, Daly looks to retrieve the more positive, constructive aspect of functional analysis. Let me give two examples. Firstly, Daly argues - like de Beauvoir - that the 'God of Otherworldliness', who encourages women to be content with their lot by holding out the lure of a reward after physical death, is one of a number of idols or false Gods who must be

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16 The Church and the Second Sex, p. 69.
17 Gyn/Ecology pps.86-88.
18 Beyond God the Father p.131.
19 Gyn/Ecology p. 231.
20 Ibid., p.87.
21 Pure Lust pp, 109-111.
22 Ibid., 157.

'dethroned' for women to progress through the liberation process. Unlike de Beauvoir, however, who regards any belief in transcendent deity as error or delusion, the displacement of the God of otherworldliness does not signal a victory for atheism or secularism. Daly salvages the idea of an otherworld and puts it to work in her feminist discourse to describe the 'real' world that is the object of the feminist spiritual 'Journey'.[24] Secondly, Daly develops de Beauvoir's identificationof Mary with the Mother goddess in a radical way. In Beyond God the Father, for instance, she writes that there are 'elements in the Mary symbol which, when "selectively perceived", have ... managed to convey a message (partial and blurred) of women's becoming'.[25] The symbol has functioned as a labrys or two-edged sword. In order to function in this way, the idea must be 'taken out of its context' in Christianity,[26] and allowed to operate as a 'free-wheeling' symbol.[27] In tandem with her critical reading, then, she explores deeper '"sub-intended" dimensions in Marian dogmas'. Thus the doctrine of the Virgin Birth is explored in terms of associated images of female autonomy and independence; [28] and the dogma of Immaculate Conception is interpreted to mean that since the female (Mary) was conceived free of sin there is thus no need to be 'saved' by the male (Christ).[29] This is later developed into defence of the myth of the parthenogenetic goddess.[30] The symbol of Mary, Daly suggests: 'partially and distortedly reflected the spark of female Elemental be-ing'.[31] However one assesses Daly's readings of Marian dogma one cannot but applaud the rationale behind her attempts. For unlike Beauvoir, Daly considers it of paramount importance that women retrieve the stories and myths which have been utilised so skilfully against our interests.

In the later 'radical feminist' writings Daly develops de Beauvoir's analysis of 'deception' beyond the sphere of religion. In Gyn/Ecology and Pure Lust Daly extends the range of the functionalist analysis across the board to include *all* cultural beliefs, images and symbols. Particular significance is assigned to the analysis of 'myth'. InGyn/Ecology Daly devotes a chapter to the ways in which patriarchy works its deception through 'myth', which she defines in terms of paradigmatic models or patternings of male domination-female subordination that are continuously reactualised through performance throughout culture. Examples of myth in this sense are the messages conveyed by an unlikely assortment of phenomena including: 'patriarchal

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23 See this thesis p.161-169.
24 Pure Lust p.10.
25 Beyond God the Father p.83
26 Ibid., p. 84
27 Ibid., p. 87; c.f. Gyn/Ecology pps.85, 87-88.
28 Beyond God the Father p. 84.
29 Ibid., p. 87.
30 Gyn/Ecology p.102-103.

scholarship', Greek myth, the media, children's literature, and the psycho-sexual cult of sado-masochism. In each of these phenomena Daly discerns the presence of patriarchal 'myths' which promote dualistic thinking; which extol the themes of male-bonding (predicated on the exclusion of women), female self-loss and self-deprecation; and which eulogise 'boundary violations' of all kinds from rape to genetic engineering.[32]

But even here there are resonances with de Beauvoir who also operates with a broad concept of 'myth'. In Part III of The Second Sex de Beauvoir argues that man's attitude to women is governed by a certain ambivalence. She illustrates this by drawing attention to the diverse concepts and associations surrounding 'woman' that have developed through the centuries. Thus the fact that women symbolise the power of Nature, in its double-edged role of matrix of life and the abyss of destruction and death, is a cause for ambivalence. The same is true for the myths about female sexuality (woman is both virgin and whore), of the myths of maternity (which express both tenderness and disdain) and of the 'Eternal Feminine' stereotype which is seen to be static and confining for women.

Daly's treatment of 'myth' falls prey to the same or similar objections as have been made against de Beauvoir. Both use the term 'myth' in a broad sense to denote any perceivable patterning of ideas and attitudes towards women on the part of a man or group of men. Although Daly seems to draw extensively from a variety of mythological and religious sources, her treatment of myths is not an empirical investigation. Daly comes to the study of myth with certain philosophical and political assumptions which colour her perspective in a particular way. This may sound obvious, but the point that I wish to make is that Daly uses myths, as de Beauvoir, to *illustrate* a certain view of man rather than to analyse 'myth' in its own right.

Intrinsic to Daly's assimilation and development of de Beauvoir's analysis of the 'myths' surrounding 'woman' is her acceptance of de Beauvoir's critical feminist distinction between sex and gender. Central to both de Beauvoir's feminist writing and to Daly's project is the question of what constitutes the fundamental 'nature' of 'woman' and her subjectivity. The question that thus arises was posed in stark terms by de Beauvoir as 'Are there women really?'.[33]

De Beauvoir's characterisation of woman's position is given in and through existentialist conceptuality. Following Sartre, de Beauvoir distinguishes between two realms of being: the 'being of phenomena' or the thing perceived is called by Sartre *l'etre-en-soi'* ('being-in-itself'), whilst the 'being of consciousness' is called *l'etre-pour-soi'* (being-for-itself). These two aspects

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31 Pure Lust p.154

32 See Gyn/Ecology pp.43-105.

33 De Beauvoir, op. cit., p.13

of being are distinct and yet each can only be fully understood in the light of its relation to the other, that is, in the light of 'being-in-the-world'. The terminology that Sartre uses is important for grasping what he means by each pole. In describing brute existence as 'in-itself' he means to draw attention to the fact that things/matter possesses a certain unity. A tree has no project, no process of becoming what it should be. Its being does not stand under question; it has no relation with itself.[34] In describing human consciousness as 'for-itself', however, Sartre signals that human beings have no pre-established substance or unity; rather must we seek to carve out our identity by perpetually *transcending* ourselves, relating all manner of things and their utility toward ourselves. Thus, with regard to human being de Beauvoir writes: 'Every subject ... achieves liberty only through a continual reaching out towards other liberties. There is no justification for present existence other than its expansion into an indefinitely open future'.[35] In choosing a project an individual shapes her/his identity, and thereby builds a position from which to interpret the world, to assign meaning and value to things. There is, however, nothing 'essential' or given about this project or position, which must be perpetually re-engaged by us. De Beauvoir continues: 'An existent *is* nothing other than what he does; the possible does not extend beyond the real, essence does not precede existence; in pure subjectivity, the human being is not anything'.[36] In as much as we lack a fixed nature, then, we are 'condemned' to freedom.

De Beauvoir reasons that: since God does not exist, there are no fixed essences and thus no human 'nature'; the set of human characteristics and virtues grouped together under the rubrics of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' are therefore the products of socio-historical and cultural processes rather than 'nature'. She also argues, partly on the basis of the preceding assumptions, that the dichotomy between 'masculine' and 'feminine' is alienating.[37] The Second Sex is about the existential struggle of the individual woman qua 'inessential object' to transcend her immanence, to rise up into full subjectivity and finally to attain both freedom and authenticity. She writes:

> (What) peculiarly signalizes the situation of woman is that she - a free and autonomous being like all human creatures - nevertheless finds herself compelled to assume the status of the Other. They propose to stabilize her as object and to doom her to immanence since her transcendence is to be overshadowed and forever transcended by another ego (conscience) which is essential and sovereign. The drama of woman lies in this conflict

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34 C.f. Sartre Nausea trans. Robert Baldick (London: Penguin, 1965; originally published as *La Nausee* by Douvelle Revue Francaise, 1938). p.178.
35 De Beauvoir, op. cit., p 27.
36 Ibid., p. 264; c.f. Sartre Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology (London: Methuen, 1957; first published as *L'Etre et le Néant* by Gallimard, 1943) p.25.
37 The Church and the Second Sex p.70.

> between the fundamental aspirations of every subject (ego) - who always regards the self as essential - and the compulsions of a situation in which she is the inessential.[38]

Once the existentialist position is staked out de Beauvoir proceeds to interpret many different things in terms of it. But fundamentally de Beauvoir utilised the fruits of her research into anthropology, biology, psychology, sociology, literature and history to reinforce her fundamental existentialist schema. As Terry Keefe notes, whilst biology and economics provide the context for male dominance 'the key factor was a metaphysical one, namely the thrust for transcendence that characterises the human species'.[39]

Daly is quick to acknowledge de Beauvoir's distinction between sex and gender,[40] and her argument that the gender constructs 'masculinity' and 'femininity' are historically and culturally contingent, and makes them the foundation of the attack upon the ideology of femininity that marks all of her feminist writings. A large part of Daly's criticism of the Church in The Church and the Second Sex is contingent upon the distinction between the female sex and femininity: for example, in her attack upon the promotion of the stereotype of the 'Eternal Feminine' in theological texts and other cultural media concerning 'woman'. The issue of difference is formulated in Daly's work in terms of the proposition that the symbolic crucible from which all forms of patriarchal discourse (including theology) and socio-political economy emerge, is an idealised, abstract asymmetry between the 'masculine' (seen to be represented and embodied by the signifier 'men') and the 'feminine' (seen to be represented and embodied by the signifier 'women'). The postulation of a symbolic difference between women and men does not necessarily infer, in and of itself, the superiority of one side of the sexual equation over the other. However, as Daly shows 'the fixed images of masculine and feminine have been used to further her [woman's] exploitation'.[41] In her criticism of the history of Christian theological discourse in The Church and the Second Sex, she shows that the symbolic gender asymmetry postulated to exist between the sexes has been traditionally organised in hierarchical terms, such that women's 'sexual difference' from males has become a mark of negativity and pejoration.[42]

This is a position from which Daly never fundamentally wavers. In Beyond God the Father she roundly rejects the rhetoric of 'innate characteristics,'[43] recording her support for the work of the radical feminist Ann Koedt who re-asserts the insight that 'biology is not destiny' and that

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38 De Beauvoir, op. cit., p.29.

39 Keefe, Terry Simone de Beauvoir: A Study of her Writings (London: Harrap, 1983) p.98.

40 See the distinction between sex and gender in Gyn/Ecology pps. 26-27, p. 168.

41 The Church and the Second Sex p.72.

42 A fact noticed in earlier centuries by so-called 'first-wave' feminists.

43 Beyond God the Father p.121.

'male and female roles are learned'.[44] In the 'Feminist Postchristian Introduction' that accompanies the 1975 re-edition of The Church and the Second Sex, Daly writes that 'the polarization of the sexes into "aggressive" as opposed to "passive" personalities is primarily the effect of socialization processes, which have created exaggerated and mutilating "psychological" differences between the sexes, having little or no causal basis in innate biological differences'.[45]

Daly's position is coincident with the political position of early radical feminists who tended to emphasise the point that biological differences have no determining effect upon personality traits and should not be socially significant. In the late 1960s in fact groups such as the New York Radical Women and the Redstockings, as well as such writers as Shulamith Firestone, Kate Millett and Grace Ti-Atkinson stressed that the similarities between men and women are greater than the differences, that men have used the differences arising in reproduction to oppress women and to define them in inferior terms. In this early radical feminist view women must fight to end this male supremacy and work toward a society in which gender distinctions lose their social significance.

One senses that Daly, like other feminist writers, draws sustenance from the sheer weight of evidence that the French writer marshals, from across the spectrum of disciplines, in support of her claims that women's existence in society is confined and limited in ways that are oppressive to them. The method of unearthing, organising and bringing into critical focus materials that in many cases have not been deemed worthy of scholarly attention is now a standard feminist approach. However, in the late 1940s - when The Second Sex appeared - such an approach to the 'women's question' was novel. Indeed, the unprecedented range and depth of de Beauvoir's probing partly explains both the discomfort and the acclaim that the book aroused on publication. (In France the book was placed on the Roman Catholic Index of forbidden works).[46] In The Church and the Second Sex Daly is clearly influenced by the systematicity with which de Beauvoir uncovers and synthesises the social facts concerning women's historic oppression. Though her own philosophical roots lay in another tradition, she plays down the philosophical differences between herself and de Beauvoir. She considers it pointless to attempt to combat Beauvoir's abstract

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44 Ibid., p.124. The politics of early radical feminism may have re-confirmed Daly's conviction that biological differences have no determining effect upon personality traits and, therefore, should not be socially significant. For a more contemporary restatement of the argument that the belief in innate difference is no part of radical feminist theory see Catherine MacKinnon 'Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: Toward a Feminist Jurisprudence' Signs: A Journal of Women, Culture and Society volume 8, no.4 Summer 1983 p.639.

45 'Feminist Postchristian Introduction'The Church and the Second Sex p.34. C.f.: Beyond God the Father p.121. For a discussion of the scientific basis for this view see Ann Oakley Sex, Gender and Society (London: Maurice Temple Smith, 1972).

46 See Reneé Winegarten Simone de Beauvoir: A Critical View (Oxford: Berg, 1988) p. 82.

existentialist theses from the perspective of an alternative ontology, because this would not alter the fundamental facts of the matter: for women would still constitute the 'second sex'.

In The Church and the Second Sex Daly is clearly aware of the danger that her Christian faith may bring her into conflict with de Beauvoir. For de Beauvoir, as for Sartre (and Nietzsche before them), the denial of God's existence is crucial in securing the freedom and transcendence that distinguishes human existence from 'mere being'.Indeed, religion is seen in this philosophical system as one of the classic ways in which human beings have alienated themselves by abrogating the responsibility that their basic freedom brings. That they have done so is due, in large measure, Sartre thinks, to the way in which theologians have encouraged the idea that, once created by God, the 'essence' or 'nature' of human being is static, fixed and immutable.

The foundational atheism that lies at the heart of Sartrean existentialism has never been a live option for Daly (either before or after her departure from the Church). Whilst acknowledging the conflict of assumptions and interests between herself and de Beauvoir, however, Daly forswears any 'a priori' rejection ofThe Second Sex simply on the grounds that it a product of atheism. Such a 'defensive stance' would, she avers, be 'naive and pietistic'[47]. In fact she considers several of de Beauvoir's existentialist ideas to be 'salient' to 'the problem of women'.

Let us return to The Church and the Second Sex. Whilst Daly considers several of de Beauvoir's existentialist ideas to be 'salient' to 'the problem of women', she is very careful to dissociate herself from de Beauvoir's existentialist philosophical perspective. So: it is *'modern evolutionary theory'* rather than existentialist philosophy that makes the notion of an immutable human nature untenable.[48] As she writes:

> Believing Christians also see man as an evolving being. Moreover, even if it is legitimate to speak of a human 'nature', this does not imply possession of an exhaustive or even exact knowledge of this 'nature' through some mysterious process of abstraction of essences. Man's knowledge of man is also continually evolving.[49]

Note here the ambiguity with regard to the discourse of 'nature'. On the one hand, Daly disputes the existentialist presupposition that belief in God commits one to the idea of an *immutable* or *fixed* human nature, though she does not develop a supporting argument.[50] She points out that some Christians also consider human being as open-ended and liable to change and even transformation. She is critical of those who attempt to read off from ... the content of what they perceive as different male and female natures. On the other hand, she is cautious about jettisoning the concept of 'nature'

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47 The Church and the Second Sex p.68.

48 Ibid., p.71.

49 Ibid.

altogether.[51] She is not convinced, as de Beauvoir, that the discourse of 'nature' is entirely vacuous; there is a sense in which she wishes to retain the discourse, albeit in a radically modified form. (In an earlier passage, for example, she is quite happy to write that what is most characteristic of the human being is the 'vocation...to dominate "nature"').[52] Following on from this Daly grounds her agreement with de Beauvoir, on the question of the socio-historical and cultural origins of gender, by a similarly empirical appeal to 'developments in modern philosophy and in the social sciences and psychology'.[53] She writes: '... our awareness of the profound and subtle effects of conditioning upon the human personality is continually increasing. There is an impressive stock of evidence in support of de Beauvoir on this point, ... the concept of woman is changing whether one is existentialist or not'.[54] Moreover, the fact that polarity between 'masculinity' and 'femininity' has been an important factor in the oppression of women is 'demonstrable, as de Beauvoir among others has shown' - the implication is through their gathering of empirical evidence across a number of fields.

In Daly's writings after The Church and the Second Sex Daly continues to re-affirm the idea that feminists must remain 'open to the data of experience'.[55] In the 'Feminist Postchristian Introduction' , for example, she admits that 'it is still unknown' whether 'genetic factors dispose boys to be more aggressive than girls'.[56] Thus Daly's view concerning the relative roles played by 'nature' and 'nurture' is supported by an appeal, not to the tenets of existentialist philosophy, but to what is 'known' (the inference is) by science.

What is significant for our purposes is not that Daly should concur with de Beauvoir on these ideas, then, but the grounds upon which she does so. Daly thus grounds these ideas not in any tacit acceptance of de Beauvoir's existentialist schema, but in the 'stock of evidence' provided by the natural and human sciences. That the foundations for Daly's support for a distinction between sex and gender are provided by empirical science, rather than by the assumptions of existentialist philosophy, is significant in as much as it implies the existence of serious philosophical differences between de Beauvoir and Daly. I submit that both Daly's appeal to 'science' and empirical evidence and the ambiguity with regard to jettisoning the concept of nature altogether suggest that Daly's work is underpinned at this point by a prior commitment, to the Thomist theology and philosophy

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50 Ibid.

51 The Church and The Second Sex, p. 71. Whilst Daly uses the name of science to justify her position she does not rehearse the scientific arguments in any detail.

52 The Church and The Second Sex, p. 55.

53 Ibid., p.71

54 Ibid., p.72.

55 Beyond God the Father p.128.

56 'Feminist Postchristian Introduction'The Church and the Second Sex p.34.

with which she was then engaged in researching in Fribourg. The influence upon Daly of Aquinas' thought will be explored in detail in the chapter three. Here, however, I simply wish to point out the significance of the fact that during the 1960s Daly was firmly entrenched in a Thomistic philosophical-theological worldview.

In the thesis in Sacred Theology, entitled The Problem of Speculative Theology (1963), Daly argues, on strict theological grounds, that theologians have a responsibility to take into account whatever truth comes from scientific study in the formulation of theological propositions (the question of woman's nature being a part of theological anthropology).[57] This conclusion is grounded in her attempts to mediate a rapprochement between theology and the 'secular' science, both human and natural. The *raison d'être* for such a rapprochement is to be found in Aquinas' conception of the 'speculative[58] nature of theology, particularly in his idea that creatures can be 'sources of theological knowledge'.[59] The attempt to build up a rapport between theology and the scientific enterprise, as well as with 'profane' culture' is not just a possibility but 'an obligation of the theologian'. As Daly explains: 'for a theology which is "open" to the natural world is by this fact committed to an acceptance of whatever relevant truth may become available from this level'.[60] There can be no isolation for the theologian in Scripture, in other words, no flight from the challenges of the natural sciences and philosophy. Theology must be fully and truly oriented to the world. In order to formalise a theological anthropology of 'woman', then, it is necessary not only to consult the work of past and present theologians but also to take heed of the evidence and conclusions emanating from contemporary scientific studies.

To summarise the argument: with regard to the question 'what is woman?' there is, on one level, complete unanimity between de Beauvoir and Daly. In The Church and the Second Sex Daly agrees with de Beauvoir's renunciation of the idea of immutable 'nature(s)' and her affirmation that to all intents and purposes, 'woman'is the product of social. I have also argued, however, that there are no grounds for assuming, purely on the basis of this, that Daly also accepts Beauvoir's existentialist presuppositions. For whilst both writers arrive at the same conclusion the route each follows in order to get to this position is quite different. This is, I think, significant. De Beauvoir begins with the existentialist schema and produces empirical evidence to support her conclusions. It is significant, for example, that her commitment to the ontological assumption that, in Sartre's

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57 Ibid., p.25

58 Speculative' theology is theology that is concerned mainly, though not exclusively, with the attainment of an intellectual *knowledge* of God.

59 The Problem of Speculative Theology p.24.

60 Ibid., p.25.

words, 'existence precedes essence'[61] *precedes* her empirical enquiry in The Second Sex. Once stated de Beauvoir proceeds to interpret many different kinds of things in terms of this apparatus.[62] In recording her agreement with Beauvoir on the issue of immutable natures and the accompanying issue of the importance of sex-role socialisation in the construal of 'woman', however, Daly adopts a cautious and critical attitude with respect to the existentialist ontology that underpins Beauvoir's reasoning. Whilst Beauvoir uses empirical evidence to bolster her pre-established existentialist presuppositions, Daly relies solely upon the former. As I have indicated, however, this attitude may be underpinned by a prior commitment to Thomist assumptions which may mean that Daly draws upon empirical evidence to reinforce her interpretation of certain Thomistic presuppositions (for example that 'nature' is not static but dynamic and open to transformation).

Thus far I have argued that what is appropriated by Daly is not de Beauvoir's existentialist ontology but the more 'empirical' aspects ofThe Second Sex, particularly the criticisms of the Church's role in perpetuating female oppression. I want now to address the work on one commentator who has put forward a contrary argument, viz., that, in her reading of The Second Sex, Daly *does* assimilate de Beauvoir's upon existentialist philosophical assumptions.

In a doctoral thesis entitled *Een Passie voor transcendentie: Feministe theologie en moderiteit in her denke van Mary Daly,* the Dutch scholar Anne-Marie Korte claims that Daly has assimilated certain key philosophical assumptions from Beauvoir's existentialist thought. Korte focuses her enquiry on the philosophical continuities that exist between Daly'sThe Church and the Second Sex and The Second Sex, though she contends that Beauvoir's 'existential-philosophical feminism has been *determinative* for the development of Daly's feminist questions both earlier and in her later works'.[63] (My italics). Whilst there is no evidence to suggest that Daly has been directly influenced by Sartre's philosophy, Korte argues that Sartrean existentialist ideas and assumptions were mediated to her through her reading of The Second Sex. Korte's thesis has radical implications. She argues that Daly's interaction with Beauvoir's work involves her in perpetuating certain 'masculinist' assumptions that are embedded in the Sartrean existentialist framework.[64] Specifically, the Sartrean dichotomy of transcendence-immanence, that is central to Beauvoir's

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61 Sartre, op. cit., p.25.

62 Keefe, op. cit., p.99.

63 Korte, op. cit., p.413.

64 For a discussion of the masculinist assumptions pervading existentialist discourse see Moira Gatens, op. cit.; Margery L. Collins and Christine Pierce 'Holes and Slime: Sexism in Sartre's Psychoanalysis' in Carol C. Gould and Marx W. Wartofsky Women and Philosophy: Toward a Theory of Liberation (Perigree); Caroline Whitbeck 'A Different Reality: Feminist Ontology' in Carol C. Gould (ed) Beyond Domination: New Perspectives on Women and Philosophy (Totawa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1984), pp. 64-85; and

account of woman as the Other, is inextricably connected, in Sartre's thought, with the category of sex.[65]

Korte's principle idea is that Daly builds upon Beauvoir's use of the dichotomy 'transcendence/immanence' as 'an interpretative framework for understanding and reflecting on the situation of women from their own perspectives'.[66] In this framework human life is conceived of, Korte writes, as 'a dialectics of "being free to" [freedom] and "being conditioned by" [facticity]'. Korte recognises the utility of a framework which is able to 'interpret women's existence in terms of restrictions and transcendence thereof', but alleges that poses problems for feminists. She links the source of these problems back to Sartre upon whose ontology The Second Sex is predicated. She writes:

> In Sartre's thinking, the opposition transcendence/immanence is connected in various ways with the category of 'sex'. The basic ontological relation between consciousness and being, as well as the borderline concepts in his ontology, God and 'the slimy', are presented in terms of masculine versus feminine. [67]

In Sartre's thinking the 'slimy' represents neither the transparent fluidity of water (which may symbolise the dynamism and lucidity of the 'for-itself') nor the opaque mass-ive quality of rock (which may symbolise the inert facticity of the 'in-itself'). Instead the slimy symbolises the possibility that the 'in-itself' might absorb the 'for-itself'. Thus in Being and Nothingness Sartre writes of the slimy in terms of ' a soft, yielding action, a moist and feminine sucking',[68] The thought of the 'for-itself' being sucked in to the slimy, down to the realm of facticity, horrifies him. He unravels what he calls the 'snare of the slimy' in terms of 'a fluidity which hold me and which compromises me'.[69] Slime is thus 'the revenge of the In-itself. A sickly-sweet, feminine revenge'.[70] Sartre talks of 'revenge' here because the usual relation of the For-itself to the In-itself is for the former to absorb the latter in its pursuit of value. In the case of that quality of being designated as the slimy, however, the opposite tendency applies and the For-itself is in permanent danger of being drawn down into its 'clinging softness'.[71]

Nancy Hartsock, op. cit., p. 286ff.
65 See for example Sartre's discussion of immanental being through the phenomenology of 'the slimy' in Being and Nothingness p.609.
66 Korte, op. cit., p.413.
67 Ibid., p.414.
68 Sartre, Being and Nothingness p.609.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 C.f. Sartre similarly symbolises the dreaded 'in-itself' in the overtly sexual image of the hole which he, of course, links with the feminine. See Being and Nothingness p.613. Drawing upon the work of Peggy Holland Daly argues that Sartre's view of women in terms of the 'slimy' and a 'hole' is symptomatic of a kind of 'castration anxiety' - seeGyn/Ecology pps.332, 402,

This connection between the dualism of transcendence/immanence and the category of 'sex' is reproduced by de Beauvoir in The Second Sex. Here Beauvoir links the female and her sex desire to qualities which align her to the 'in-itself'. Thus the feminine is described by de Beauvoir in terms similar to Sartre's description of the slimy. Feminine desire is, she writes: 'the soft throbbing of a mollusc ... woman lies in wait like a carnivorous plant, the bog, in which insects and children are swallowed up. She is absorption, suction, humus, pitch and glue, a passive influx, insinuating and viscous...'.[72] Masculine desire is something altogether different and reminiscent of the 'for-itself'. She writes:

> A man reaches out towards his partner, but he himself remains at the centre of this activity, being, on the whole, the subject as opposed to objects that he perceives and instruments that he manipulates; he projects himself towards the other without losing his independence; the feminine flesh is for him a prey, and through it he gains access to the qualities he desires, as with any object.[73]

Even here, then, in the most intimate aspects of human being woman is seen to be tied to immanental being whilst man's desire is consonant with the quest for transcendence that Beauvoir wishes to valorise.

In re-producing the hierarchical dualistic notion of transcendence-immanence, Korte argues, Daly inadvertently reinscribes Sartre's negative assumptions regarding the female sex. Whilst she does not use the term 'male-stream', her argument is to the effect that Sartrean existentialism is a product and reflection of what I have called male-stream culture and that Daly's dependence upon Beauvoir (and, by implication, Sartre) makes her own work inherently problematic from a feminist perspective.

Does Daly tacitly assimilate the existentialist schema as Korte suggests? I do not believe so. I have already shown that in The Church and the Second Sex Daly distances herself from de Beauvoir's existentialist philosophy. In order to fully establish my case I shall now extend my analysis to embrace Daly's subsequent feminist works.

As we have seen, the linchpin of Korte's argument is the stipulation that Daly replicates de Beauvoir's conception of 'transcendence'. In a way analogous to de Beauvoir, Daly wishes to see women realise their capacity for 'transcendence'. However, the meaning of this term, in Daly's writings, is quite different to the meaning put forward by de Beauvoir in The Second Sex. This difference is to be explained by the fundamentally different ontological frameworks within which

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72 De Beauvoir, op. cit., p.407.
73 Ibid., p.393.

each writer operates - a fact to which I have already alluded. Let us look first at the ontological framework in which de Beauvoir's idea of transcendence acquires meaning.

As we have seen, for Beauvoir the concept of transcendence finds its meaning in a thoroughly dualistic ontology in which it is valorised over and against immanence. Yet this is only one of a whole series of dualisms that pervade the Sartrean existentialist framework. Other pairs include authenticity/bad faith, freedom/ compulsion, subject/object, culture/nature, essential/inessential and, of course, masculine/feminine. This dualistic understanding of the structure of reality follows in the philosophical trajectory of Georg Hegel, and Sartre, and in the wake of the social anthropology of Claude Levi-Strauss (whose Elementary Structures of Kinship was published in the same year as the first volume of The Second Sex). Strauss' principle thesis that the transition from a state of nature to a state of culture is characterised by the development of a consciousness of what feminists now call 'binary opposition'. For Levi-Strauss duality, alterity, opposition are fundamental and immediately given data of social reality. De Beauvoir draws upon each of these thinkers in setting out her philosophical stall. Thus, following Levi-Strauss she considers otherness to be a fundamental category of human thought.[74] De Beauvoir accounts for this structuralist phenomenon in terms of the Hegelian dialectic. She writes: 'Things become clear... if, following Hegel, we find in consciousness itself a fundamental hostility toward every other consciousness; the subject can be posed only in being opposed - he sets himself up as the essential as opposed to the other, the inessential, the object'.[75] Following in the footsteps both of Sartre and of Hegel, then, she posits an original aspiration to dominate the Other within consciousness. On this account it is only by playing itself off negatively against others that self-consciousness can be established. She writes:

> At the moment when man asserts himself as subject and free being, the idea of the Other arises. From that day the relation with the Other is dramatic: the existence of the Other is a threat, a danger. Ancient Greek philosophy showed that alterity, otherness, is the same thing as negation, and therefore Evil. To pose the Other is to define a Manichaeism.[76]

Yet the process of attaining subjectivity is not wholly unproblematic for: 'The other consciousness, the other ego, sets up a reciprocal claim'[77] In other words, the Other - the objectified consciousness - is also a subject self struggling to affirm itself.

In her illustration of the process of objectification de Beauvoir employs Sartre's phenomenology of 'the look',[78] likening the subject self to 'the native travelling abroad' who 'is

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74 Ibid., p.17.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid., p.111.
77 Ibid.

shocked to find himself in turn regarded as a "stranger" by the natives of neighbouring countries'.[79] In Being and Nothingness Sartre defines the subject-as-object in connection with the possibility of 'being-seen-by another'. This other fixes one under its 'look'[80] such that one cannot enjoy authentic, autonomous subjectivity. When we internalise what the look conceives us to be we are effectively trapped by another consciousness. He writes: 'It is in and through the revelation of my being-as-object for the Other that I must be able to apprehend the presence of his being-as-subject. For just as the Other is a probable object for me-as-a-subject, so I can discover myself in the process of becoming a probable object for only a certain subject'.[81] Thus he writes: 'It is by the very fact of being that I exclude the Other. The Other is the one who excludes me by being himself, the one whom I exclude by being myself'.[82] One comes to see the Other as the embodiment of all the negative qualities which one wishes to do away with, or, as Sartre has it: 'The Other becomes then that which I make myself not-be'.[83] In the quest for self-identity, therefore, one comes to perceive the Other as the repository of all the negative qualities that one despises.

In her critique of culture and society de Beauvoir applies Sartre's dialectic of consciousness as part of her account as to why society is male-centred (androcentric) and male-dominated. Now it should be noted that, for de Beauvoir, it is not the inherently conflictual nature of consciousness that constitutes the crux of the problem for women. For conflict is simply a 'given' of consciousness and must be accepted. So de Beauvoir writes: 'It is easy to see that the duality of the sexes, like any duality, gives rise to conflict. And doubtless the winner will assume the status of absolute'.[84] Some degree of friction between men and women is therefore to be expected by virtue of the fact that men and women constitute each other *as others*. This in itself does not constitute the essence of the problem of women's status as Other.

The real problem, she considers, is that the duality has not been marked by reciprocity; on the contrary, there is an *absoluteness* about the collective Otherness of woman in comparison to other social groupings. Referring to these groups de Beauvoir notes: '... wars festivals, trading, treaties, and contests among tribes, nations, and classes tend to deprive the concept Other of its

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78 Sartre, Being and Nothingness pp.252-303.
79 De Beauvoir, op. cit., p.17.
80 We should note that the 'look' goes beyond the organs of sight, the eyes, and can encapsulate anything that may 'represent the eye'. As Sartre writes: 'The look will be given just as well on occasion when there is a rustling of branches, or the sound of a footstep followed by silence, or the slight opening of a shutter, or a light movement of a curtain'.Sartre, Being and Nothingness p.258
81 See Sartre, Being and Nothingness pp. 256-57. Sartre elucidates this experience through the phenomenon of 'shame': 'the recognition of the fact that I am indeed that object which the Other is looking at and judging'. (p. 261)
82 Ibid., p.212.
83 Ibid., p.264.
84 De Beauvoir, op. cit., p.21.

absolute sense and to make manifest its relativity... [such that] willy-nilly, individuals and groups are forced to realize the *reciprocity* of their relations'.[85] [My emphasis]. Reciprocity of a kind - that is, one forged 'sometimes in enmity, sometimes in amity, always in a state of tension[86] - is able to emerge, de Beauvoir thinks, if and when the two human categories that aspire to impose their sovereignty upon the other 'are able to resist this imposition'.[87] De Beauvoir notes that women have never been able to resist men's imposition of their sovereignty and wonders why this should be.[88] Comparing the oppression of women with the status of minority groups - 'the American Negroes', 'the Jews' and 'the proletariat' - she claims that whilst the oppression of these groups is the result of historical events the relegation of women to the status of the Other has a primordial aspect to it. She believes that the androcentric categorisation of women as Other transcends both history and culture. Women have been subordinated to men 'throughout history' such that 'their dependency is not the result of a historical event or a social change' but was instead symptomatic of an ontological dualism[89] such that: 'This has always been a man's world'.[90] Women have, she thinks, 'no past, no history, no religion of their own; and they have no such solidarity of work and interest as that of the proletariat'.[91] Moreover they are scattered among the male population; separated economically from each other because their primary allegiance is not to each other but to men, especially men of their own class because their social status is derived from these men. Women thus find themselves 'living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the Other'.[92] Women are forced into the role of being-in-itself; men assume the autonomous standpoint of the for-itself. Man attempts 'to stabilize her as an object and to doom her to immanence since her transcendence is to be overshadowed and forever transcended by another ego ... which is essential and sovereign'.[93] Beauvoir rereads the history of human society in terms of this model. In this paradigmatic interpretation of history woman is: 'defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute - she is the Other'.[94]

When we turn to Daly's writings it becomes evident that the concept of transcendence acquires its meaning as part of a completely different, *non-dualistic* philosophical-theological

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85 Ibid., p.17.
86 Ibid., p. 93
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid., p.17.
89 Ibid., p.18
90 Ibid., p.93.
91 Ibid., 19
92 Ibid., p.29.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid., p.16.

context in which 'Be-ing' has no 'over against' or 'Other'. (In Daly's feminist thought, of course, 'Be-ing' is synonymous with that which she formerly termed 'God' and now calls, among other things, the 'Goddess'). She writes: 'This Verb - the Verb of Verbs - is intransitive', that is, 'It need not be conceived as having an object that limits its dynamism'.[95] In Daly's view of reality there is nothing that can stand opposed to 'Be-ing'. 'Be-ing' is not a member of any class or genus for, in so far as it connotes the very giv-ing of existence, it is *absolutely transcendent* to every-thing that is 'in' existence. It is quite simply 'nonreifiable'.[96] Even 'nonbeing' or 'nothingness' (in Daly's vocabulary) does not stand over against Be-ing, for nonbeing is a privation of being rather than its negation.

Interestingly, Daly articulates the idea of 'Be-ing' as that which has no Other by making a contrast between Sartre's notion of humankind's desire to be God and her own understanding of the human connection to God or Be-ing. For Sartre man instantiates 'the desire to be God' in the attempt of the 'for-itself to attain unity with the 'in-itself'. Sartre sees this phenomenon at work in his analysis of 'possession'.[97] Commenting upon Sartre's formulation of this desire Daly writes:

> When Sartre wrote that 'man [sic] fundamentally *is* the desire to be God,' he was saying that the most radical passion of human life is to be a God who does not and cannot exist. The ontological hope of which I am speaking is neither this self-deification nor the simplistic reified images often lurking behind such terms as 'Creator', 'Lord', 'Judge', that Sartre rightly rejects. It transcends these because its experiential basis is courageous participation in being.[98]

Be-ing is not some-thing 'graspable' or 'manipulable' by us, but rather a 'Verb in which we participate'.[99] For Daly, then, the quest for transcendence is implicit in our participation in Be-ing.

This non-dualistic ontological scheme is reflected in Daly's construal of the problem of female Otherness. Let us begin then by considering Daly's position in Beyond God the Father. Daly maintains that for the patriarchal mindset women as a group represent the 'Other', 'the primordial scapegoat', 'The Enemy' to be fought, captured and subjugated by men. The roots of this conceptualisation, she suggests, lies in 'an alienative opposition of opposites', an '"On top" thinking, imagining, and acting'[100] or 'machismo ethos'[101] that has penetrated into the depths of the human psyche. This ethos, she argues, 'creates a web of projections, introjections and self-fulfilling

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95 Beyond God the Father p. 34
96 Ibid., p.178
97 Sartre, Being and Nothingness p.592
98 Beyond God the Father p.34.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid., p.94
101 Ibid., p.10.

prophesies. It fosters a basic alienation within the psyche that is then projected onto "the Other"'.[102] The question arises, of course, as to what engendered the myth of female Otherness in the first place. Drawing upon the work of Erich Neumann in depth psychology[103] Daly summarises the (pathological) 'psychological climate' that spawns such an attitude. She writes:

> For 'mass man' ... evil cannot be acknowledged as one's own evil, since consciousness is too weakly developed to deal with such an internal conflict. Therefore, evil is experienced as something alien. The outcast role of the alien is important as an object for the projection of the 'shadow' (our own unconscious counterpersonality), so that this can be exteriorized and destroyed.[104]

Daly goes on to argue that patriarchal males direct their 'negativity' or self-hatred outside themselves and project it onto women. 'Woman' becomes the original objectification of evil, the primordial alien that must be destroyed. The pejorative value that is thereby assigned to women by men becomes part of the store of cultural 'knowledge' which is internalised by women, such that women actually come to see themselves in negative terms (the 'vicious circle'). It is in this way that women become 'colonised' , 'divided' beings, who are, 'at the same time themselves and the oppressor whose consciousness they have internalised'.[105]

Daly's general term for the tendency towards objectification of another being is 'rapism'. The fundamental dynamic involved in 'rapism' is 'adaptable to national, racial, and class differences'.[106] The pathological tendency manifests itself also through 'genocide' and 'war', (which together with 'rape' constitute The 'Most Unholy Trinity' of patriarchy).[107] In an article published in 1975, entitled 'A Short Essay on Hearing and the Qualitative Leap of Radical Feminism' , Daly argues for a direct 'causal connection' between the 'socialization of males to sexual violence 'rapism', and 'the rape of the land and water, the rape of the poor, of Blacks, of the Third World' and so on.[108] 'The logical extension of the mentality of rape', she writes, 'is the objectification of all who can be cast into the role of victims of violence'.[109] But she believes that whilst historically other social groups and

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102 Ibid.
103 Neumann Depth Psychology and a New Ethic translated by Eugene Rolfe (N.Y: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1969; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969).
104 Beyond God the Father p.10.
105 Ibid., p. 48.
106 Ibid., p.46.
107 Ibid., p.116ff.
108 Daly 'A Short Essay on Hearing and the Qualitative Leap of Radical Feminism'Horizons 2 (1975) pp.120-24, at 121.
109 Beyond God the Father p.118; c.f. 'Original Reintroduction' p. xvi

Nature 'herself' are denigrated and exploited as Other, it is male domination of women that functions as the primary model and paradigm for every other form of domination.[110]

In Gyn/Ecology Daly speculates that patriarchal males sense 'something lacking in ... themselves',[111] that male subjectivity is characterised by a fundamental awareness and fear of its own 'emptiness' or 'sterility'. She writes: 'This awareness of emptiness has a causal relationship to the rigid role definitions required by patriarchal males, for the male, sensing his inner barrenness, is "deeply dependent on the structure of society to define his role"'.[112] Again, at the heart of male projection, it is suggested, lies a consciousness that is 'split against itself'. Such a consciousness 'suffers from an inability to reach beyond externals', it is powerless 'to reach beyond appearances' tending, instead, to try to reduce and fragment the 'be-ing' that ever evades its grasp.[113] Just as the rapist 'breaks into matter, rips and tears, yet moves further from the be-ing of his victim' so patriarchal male impotence 'manifests itself in attempting to penetrate, to pierce into an inner reality which the invader yearns to destroy, but cannot even find'.[114] The culture that has arisen out of the dynamics of this 'split consciousness' is the 'S and M Society', the culture of sado-masochism.[115] Sado-masochism is, she writes: 'the normal mode of existence of the patriarchal male, who is unable to relate to the inner mystery, integrity, Self of the Other, unable to connect with originally moving be-ing'.[116] Such a dichotomising-reifying-projecting consciousness poses an immediate threat to others for: 'To consider a person .... an object', she writes, 'is fundamentally an egoistic and hostile act'.[117] For Daly it is precisely the hostile tendency to objectify others that has led to the social oppression of women and the exploitation of Nature.

Thus far I have shown not only that each writer puts forward a distinct ontology of the 'Other' , but that Daly's theory runs directly counter to that put forward by de Beauvoir in significant ways. Indeed, what we actually witness, in the evolution of Daly's work, is not the absorption of de Beauvoir's conflictual dualism but, on the contrary, a developing critique of this dynamic both in human social life and in the relationality between human culture and 'Nature'.

Whilst they both consider the problem of women's subordinate status to be *in some way connected* to their objectification by males, each construes the causes of female Otherness in different ways. The difference between the two writers centres around hierarchical or conflictual dualism, that is, the tendency to view reality as a process of conflict and 'death-struggle' between

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110 Ibid., p.46.
111 Gyn/Ecology p.359.
112 Ibid., p.360.
113 Ibid., pp. 386-87.
114 Ibid.
115 Ibid.
116 Ibid.

opposing elements.[118] The logic that underpins this structure predicates a hierarchical, non-reciprocal relationship between the two terms that effectively privileges one term over and against another, making its opposite contingent upon it. For de Beauvoir the process of making another being 'Other' is relatively unproblematic, it is a 'given' that cannot be altered on an individual level. The problem of women as the 'Other' arises for her because women's objectification is collective and absolute. For Daly, however, it is conflictual dualistic thinking and behaving in and of itself that is the crux of the problem of female Otherness. What is for de Beauvoir a characteristic of consciousness itself and hence relatively innocuous is, for Daly, a deep-rooted ontological pathology.

The term that Daly uses in her 'gynocentric' writings to describe this pathology is 'necrophilia' or 'hatred for and envy of life'.[119] It is a 'telic' disorder at the very heart of consciousness. The concept of 'necrophily' (and its corresponding term 'biophila') derive from the writings of Erich Fromm. In his book The Heart of Man Fromm writes:

> While life is characterized by growth in a structured, functional manner, the necrophilous person loves all that does not grow, all that is mechanical. The necrophilous person is driven by the desire to transform the organic into the inorganic, to approach life mechanically, as if all living persons were things ... Memory rather than experience; having, rather than being, is what counts. The necrophilous person can relate to an object - a flower or a person - only if he possesses it; hence a threat to his possession is a threat to himself; if he loses possession he loses contact with the world ... He loves control, and in the act of controlling he kills life.[120]

Like Paolo Freire who also utilised Fromm's concept, Daly believes that the presence of necrophily in the soul makes those who suffer it unable to accept or to recognise the 'be-ing' of the ' Other' in its integrity. As Freire writes: 'Oppression - overwhelming control - is necrophilic; it is nourished by the love of death, not life'.[121] The only way a necrophilous person can relate to the Other is through

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117 The Church and the Second Sex p.161.

118 For another feminist critique of this tendency and the formulation of an alternative ontology see Whitbeck, 'A Different Reality: Feminist Ontology' inGould, Beyond Domination. The same kind of critique though stated in very different psychological terms is made by Naomi Scheman, 'Individualism and The Objects of Psychology' in Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka (eds.) Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology and Philosophy of Science. (Synthese Library 161; Boston: D. Reidel, 1983).

119 The Wickedary p.83

120 Fromm, Erich The Heart of Man: its Genius for Good and Evil (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1968) C.f.: Daly's criticism of Fromm on necrophiliaGyn/Ecology p.61f.

121 Freire, Paolo Pedagogy of the Oppressed translated by Myra Bergman Ramos (N.Y.: Herder and Herder, 1970) p. 64.

mastery, control and possession. For Daly necrophilia is hierarchical dualism: the quintessence of 'phallocracy'. Moreover the core of this destructive tendency is 'woman-hating'.[122]

In sum Daly perceives the kind of the self-other relation advanced by de Beauvoir to be symptomatic of patriarchal relations. The Sartrean view of the self-other relation as an attempt to overcome subjective alienation by invading and subordinating the Other - which Beauvoir employs in her theory of woman as the Other - is precisely the view of self-other relations that Daly criticises as 'sado-masochism'. With regard to human sociality it will be remembered that for de Beauvoir, whilst we need others in order to come to self-consciousness, we cannot really attain genuine 'inter-subjectivity'; that is to say, we cannot really meet that person in his/her own subjectivity. But we find this difficult to bear and try instead to make the other into an object to be manipulated (an attitude that Daly argues is sadistic), or we try to make ourselves into objects, we allow ourselves to be possessed and used (which Daly argues is masochistic). The only hope for peace between the warring categories lies in the hope that each will somehow be able to maintain its subjectivity in the face of objectification by another. In Daly's thinking the very dynamic of 'transcendence' that objectifies another individual or group is considered to be 'demonic'.[123] Transcendence is, for Daly, not primarily or exclusively about struggle against another. As she writes in Beyond God the Father, the feminist myth of transcendence cannot be one of 'conflict and vindication'. Transcendence cannot be reduced to fighting another (the 'enemy' - though active struggle against oppression is necessary) because this makes 'perpetual oppression necessary'.[124] Rather, the key to change is 'integration and transformation' of the divided self.[125] So she writes: 'Our liberation consists in refusing to be 'the Other' and asserting instead "I am" - without making another "the Other". Unlike Sartre's "us versus a third" (the closest approximation to love possible in his world) the new sisterhood is saying "us versus nonbeing"'.[126] In contrast to de Beauvoir Daly believes that it is both possible and necessary to transcend the objectifying consciousness of what she calls, following Buber, 'I-It' and approach the intersubjective communion of 'I-Thou'. Like Buber, Daly thinks that there is clearly a social necessity for 'I-It' or 'technical' knowledge and thus for some objectifying thought. But she believes that such an attitude should not dominate social relations for, when it is cut off from ontological reason ('I-Thou') it 'degrades its object and dehumanizes the knowing subject'. Such an experience can only be transformed 'through encounter with another subject, an I who refuses to be an It'. She writes:

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122 Gyn/Ecology p.62.
123 Beyond God the Father p.10.
124 'Original Reintroduction' Ibid.,p.xiii.
125 Ibid., p.26.
126 Ibid.

> If, however, the encounter is simply a struggle over who will be forced into the position of It, this will not be ultimately redemptive. It is only when the subject is brought to a recognition of the other's damaged but never totally destroyed subjectivity as equal to his/her own, having basically the same potential and aspiration to transcendence, that a qualitatively new way of being in the world and toward God can emerge.[127]

For Daly '... feminism is not merely an issue but rather a new mode of being',[128] one that 'portends transcendence, not only of the sexism, but also of the conflict'.[129] New possibilities for social relation and also for the relation between human culture and the world of nature emerge when women refuse to be objectified and instead affirm being.[130] Women must exorcise the demonic power in the psyche - the 'masculine subject within' - that reduces the self to an object.[131] This cannot occur all at once; it requires time and a supportive community ('sisterhood').[132] Liberation thus comes to be synonymous with *presentization* or the coming-forth of women's be-ing from the patriarchal hinterland of silence, absence or fragmentation.

Daly wants to move in some sense 'beyond opposition' altogether, a move which is impossible for Beauvoir in whose philosophy duality is an 'original' category. That human beings are *capable* of moving beyond such combative relations follows from her implicit assumption that the dynamics of conflictual opposition are not in any way 'original' to consciousness, as Beauvoir holds. There is no doubt that Daly employs the language of transcendence. The essential question is *does* she assimilate the meaning of the word *as it is given by Beauvoir*, that is, the meaning of the word when placed within its semantic context in the web of related signs in the universe of discourse known as 'Sartrean existentialism'? I have shown that the answer to this question in the negative. By transcendence Daly understands a certain movement, a 'going beyond' what is already attained. This much she (and all others who utilise the word) have in common with Beauvoir and Sartre. But beyond this superficial resemblance there is in fact little similarity. As I have shown the concept of transcendence in Daly's writings acquires its meaning - as indeed, does the related concept of 'creativity' - from a philosophical context in which the generous and effusive nature of Be-ing is a marked feature. Clearly, then, there are fundamental disparities between the ontologies of the two writers that make any argument for their coalescence (such as that advanced by Korte) untenable.

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127 Ibid., p. 40.
128 Ibid., p.113.
129 Ibid., p.153.
130 Ibid., p.39.
131 Ibid., p.50.
132 Ibid.

Given the fact that there is no indication in Daly's writings that she ever actively absorbed elements from existentialist ontology how do we account for the allegation that hierarchical dualism is present in those parts of Daly's work in whichshe sets up certain individuals and groups as Other? As Marjorie Suchoki observes: 'For all the rhetoric and rationale, it is possible to read *Gyn/Ecology* with a sense of re-projection of alien otherness, now upon males, and hence a continuation in the name of feminists of the devastating effects of dualism'.[133] This is potentially very serious because: 'Any system which rests upon the annihilation or subjugation of the other, all the while paradoxically re-quiring the continuation of the other in order that the attempt to subjugate and so remain dualistic might continue, is essentially death dealing, death feeding, and death loving...By dancing with dualism in any form, do we not court the corollary, necrophilia?'.[134] If such a claim is true it might perhaps mean that Daly is guilty of what I, in my argument, have shown Beauvoir to be doing, namely failing to get beyond the dynamics of hierarchical dualism that have caused the problem of Otherness in the first place.

In showing precisely *how* Daly construes otherness in her texts I turn to describe the critique of Daly's work made by Meaghan Morris in a chapter in her book,The Pirate's Fiancée,[135] entitled 'A-mazing Grace: Notes on Mary Daly's Poetics'. Morris maintains that Daly operates within a dualistic framework in which 'good' women are opposed to males and 'bad' women, and that this duality between Feminist Selves and non-feminist Others is reinforced through Daly's rhetorical practice. Perhaps most poignantly Morris shows that 'at the end of Daly's voyage through the maze/haze of patriarchy's deceptions..[we find] yet another image of the evil of Other women':[136] the token, the fembot, Athena, the Painted Bird, the totalled woman. The crux of Morris' argument is that Daly's use of language cannot be separated from a certain politics for: 'the coherence of Daly's position is such that the pleasure of the text is bound up with the pleasure of participating in the political scenario of the Feminist Western, where good (*some* women) battles evil (males + 'fembots'), and where Athena wears the black hat while Artemis wears the white'.[137] Morris gives two examples of the way in which the generation of symbolic female Others in Daly's texts in reinforced by her rhetorical practice. Both examples draw attention to the way in which an elitist structure is woven into the very fabric of Daly's presentation in Gyn/Ecology; a book in which Daly 'creates a self-enclosed and self-justified system of thought which disarms criticism by prejudging

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133 Suchoki, Marjorie 'The Challenge of Mary Daly'Encounter volume 41 (autumn, 1980), p.309.
134 Ibid. C.f. a similar criticism of dualism in Daly's writings by Ross Kraemer, op. cit., pp.254-56.
135 Morris, op. cit.
136 Ibid., p.28.
137 Ibid.

her critics and denying their legitimacy. To disagree with her is to put oneself outside the circle of the elect for whom the book is written. The critic is, by definition, one of the enemy'.[138]

The first example concerns something that happened at a lecture given by Daly in Sydney in August 1981. Daly's speech was interrupted by a woman who called out: 'Mary, you're not speaking to *me*...'. In response to the woman's interjection Daly presented her with the choice of either staying (and, as Morris elaborates, accepting the speech) or leaving (and rejecting it). What is noteworthy, Morris argues, is that Daly refused point blank to 'change rhetorics' or 'to change the mode of *énonciation* to deal with this new "I" that had emerged by posing Mary Daly as the "you"'.[139] That is, she refused either to 'address the new "I" on its own terms, or to modify the*we*-ness of her address in any way', a strategy Morris describes as 'a schoolroom tactic', a version of 'identification-games'.[140] This manoeuvre is 'perfectly consistent with the idea at work in*Gyn/Ecology* that discourse is a way of distinguishing those who are For you from those who are Against. Those who are For you can share your speech, those who are Against cannot'.[141]

The second example afforded by Morris centres upon the passage in Gyn/Ecology entitled 'The Dissembly of Exorcism'.[142] This passage is an attempt by Daly to 'Dis-Spell' the Procession of patriarchal demons who try to 'blend their voices in our Hearings,'[143] unweaving their deceptions. Daly represents each band of demons as 'ghostly personifications (masks of the Deadly Sins of the Fathers'.[144] Each group addresses the 'Dissembly' in turn, trying to seduce the Amazons with a variety of inducements including offers of help (through psychotherapy, religion, affirmative-action etc.), security (health insurance, retirement plans etc.) and the allurements of 'Job Opportunities for Assertive Women'. The list goes on. At the end the demons are all undone; some are engulfed in a huge cobweb spun by members of the 'Convocation', others are stopped in their tracks simply by the 'roaring of the Revolted Hags' whilst yet other unravel into nothingness. Commenting on this passage Morris writes: 'This is not only about the impossibility of*dialogue* (between males and females, evil and good) but also about the idea that discourse tells you who people 'are', and if you know who they are then you can't be deceived by their discourse - including their attempts to share, to join, to make contact or connect with your speech'.[145] Daly's discourse is, in other words, marked by 'a celebration of Complete Closure constituted by the*Gyn/Ecological* speaking-position'.[146]

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138 Ibid., p.38. Quoting Jill Matthews.
139 Ibid., p.39.
140 Ibid.
141 Ibid.
142 Gyn/Ecology pp.418-22.
143 Ibid. p.418.
144 Ibid.
145 Morris, op. cit., p.40.
146 Ibid.

Morris argues that such a strategy holds affinities with 'romantic theories of the redemptive function of Art, and the special nature of Be-ings called Artists'.[147]

Endemic to Daly's politics, then, is the 'structural necessity FOR a symbol of the Other[148] whether this be 'males' or certain categories of women. In this Daly's writing is symptomatic of a tradition of (patriarchal) philosophical discourse that produces its own identity 'by projecting an image of an Other who lacks that same identity (thus *creating* that Other in the process)'.[149] Whilst Morris does not attribute the generation of a symbolics of otherness in Daly's writings to Daly's use of Beauvoir's existentialist philosophy, she makes an interesting and pertinent comparison between the function of the image of the Painted Bird in Daly's writing to that of the imagery of 'holes' and 'slime' in Sartre's work. She adduces that the projection of the image of evil in other women is indispensable to the Gyn/Ecological peaking position' in the same way that Sartre's holes and slime imagery provides 'the counterfigure which is indispensable to the existentialist system'.[150] Morris goes no further than to suggest a structural similarity between Daly and Sartre; she makes no attempt to show that the presence of symbolic otherness in Daly is in fact derived from Sartre through Daly's use of The Second Sex.[151] Nevertheless the issue of Otherness clearly impinges on the subject-matter of the present chapter in as much as it points back to a structural similarity between Daly's work and that of Sartre ... that Daly's writings are marred by the presence, at various levels in the substance and structure of her narratives, of dualism in the form of a symbolics of otherness which is structurally isomorphic with that at the heart of Sartre's philosophy. Some explanation of Daly's practice is therefore warranted.

What could possibly account for Daly setting up other Others that function as the adversary for 'Wild women'? One is hard put to formulate any kind of defence of Daly in response to Morris' critique. Daly is clearly aware that she sets up certain groups as opposite and as Other (to the Amazon-subject). It is however a tendency that developed relatively late in her writing career. In The Church and the Second Sex Daly incorporates Beauvoir's idea that women need to escape their Otherness by 'raising up their own image' and attaining historical subjectivity. This strategy proceeds from the aspiration to gain what men have enjoyed for centuries, that is, full and non-derived subject-status acknowledged in both law and custom. Later, however, Daly distances herself from this Beauvoirian position and begins to advocate that women should *embrace* 'strategic

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147 Ibid. Morris realises the danger here of generalisations about romanticism.
148 Ibid., p.43.
149 Ibid.
150 Ibid..
151 Indeed Morris cites Michele Le Doeuff who argues that (in Morris' words) in transposing 'the existentialist problematic from the status of a system to that of a point of view "trained on a determinate and partial field of existence", ... she [Beauvoir] was able to eliminate the need for a counterfigure...'. p.43.

Otherness', that is, to identify and support those aspects of women's experience that are potentially sources of power and strength. In the 'Feminist Postchristian Introduction' to the second edition of The Church and the Second Sex (1975) Daly comments on her former position in support of androgyny:

> Like de Beauvoir, she [Daly] expressed the wish that 'men and women can learn to 'set their pride beyond the sexual differentiation' ... The time had not yet arrived when women would learn to set our pride not only beyond but in the sexual differentiation - not in the differentiation as defined by the patriarchs ('the eternal feminine'), but as defined by *us*.[152]

She later speaks of deviance 'from the "norm" which was first imposed but which can also be *chosen* on our own terms'.[153] Feminist women, she contends, enjoy an 'intuition' of their 'radical Otherness' from patriarchal males and their 'forms/shapes of consciousness, speech and behavior'[154] that is ontologically positive and psychically therapeutic. Daly thus posits the choice to be Other as a strategic political strategy. It is a 'differentiation[that] is affirmed by a series of conscious choices'.[155] In Daly's later writings, then, the term 'women' signifies a *potential* unity, for it is contingent upon ongoing, consciously made choices. It is moreover a unity which arises out of the recognition of women's fundamental difference(s) from the old patriarchal definitions.

To be fair to Daly here there is indeed a 'warrior' aspect to feminism. As she writes of the Amazon: 'The point is that she did not create The War, but rather finds herself in a set-up in which fighting is necessary for Surviving. An obvious consequence of this situation is the fact that patriarchal males are the enemies of women'.[156] Thus 'besieged Furies *do* fight back. There is, then, an element in Haggard bonding which is "us versus a third", and which is Positively furious. yet Crones know that this warrior aspect of Amazon bonding becomes truly dreadless only when it is focused beyond fighting'.[157] But she is quick to point out that the focus of feminists must be beyond the fighting. As she says: 'The fighter role of Furies is a derivative status, necessitated by the fact that women are the primal objects of patriarchal attack ...The fighting of Furies is effective only to the extent that we succeed in reversing the reversal that reduces our Selves to the condition of The Enemy'.[158]

Does this mean that for Daly 'feminism' is constituted solely by the ideologically pure in heart? I think not. As she herself puts it: 'Feminism', Daly writes, 'is a Name for our

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152 The Church and the Second Sex p.47.
153 Ibid., p.50.
154 Pure Lust p.396.
155 Ibid., p.351.
156 Gyn/Ecology p.365.
157 Ibid., p.370.

moving/movement into Metabeing'.[159] This conception of feminism is perhaps the most inclusive of any that I can readily summon to mind. And Daly recognises all too acutely the profound differences that characterise the women's movement. Thus she writes:

> Since women have a variety of strengths and since we have all been damaged in a variety of ways, our yes-saying assumes different forms and is in different degrees. In some cases it is clear and intense; in other instances it is sporadic, diffused, fragmented. Since Female-identified yes-saying is complex participation in be-ing, since it is a Journey, a process, there is no simple and adequate way to divide the Female World into two camps: those who say 'yes' to women and those who do not.[160]

It may well be that as Caroline Whitbeck puts it in addressing the same problem:

> In arguing that reality should not be understood dualistically, I am not arguing that oppositional thinking is never helpful in the continuing struggle to liberate our thinking. It may sometimes be important to temporarily reorganize one's experience in terms ofan opposition of the self and the oppressive other in order to liberate oneself from fatalistic acceptance of oppression.[161]

If this is the so, then, there is no active contradiction between Daly's political practice, in which from time to time she finds it necessary to encounter other groups as Others against whom she must struggle, and her nondualistic ontology.

The significance of the present chapter has been in clarifying the fundamental philosophical difference between de Beauvoir and Daly. Of particular importance for Dalyian scholars is the fact that Daly is at no point drawn into accepting existentialist precommitments along with de Beauvoir's criticism of sexual stereotypes. Indeed, the evidence that I have presented so far with regard to Daly's points in quite another philosophical direction. Moreover I have shown Daly's later alleged 'essentialism' to be a misinterpretation of her position. ThroughoutGyn/Ecology and Pure Lust Daly's analytic emphasis remains focused upon the disastrous effects of sex-role conditioning that lead patriarchal individuals to think and act in ways that are profoundly anti-life. The hierarchical dualism that pervades de Beauvoir's thought has never been a structural*necessity* in Daly's theory, as it is in Sartrean existentialism though, as I have shown, on occasion Daly - for purely political reasons - does indeed set up certain groups (most notably the group signified by the term 'patriarchal males') as the Other to women who are struggling for liberation. In this sense, then, one can say that

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158 Ibid., p.365.
159 Pure Lust p.194.
160 Gyn/Ecology p.xlviii-xlix.
161 Caroline Whitbeck in Gould Beyond Domination ftn.1, p.83.

Daly has not engaged with the male-stream tradition of Sartrean existentialism in any significant way.

This does not mean that Beauvoir has not been influential upon Daly's thinking in other ways. As I have shown Daly was particularly inspired by the French writer's functionalist criticism of Christianity as patriarchal ideology, most particularly her analysis of the 'myths' of femininity, a theme that went on to feature prominently in Daly's later work Beyond God the Father, Gyn/Ecology and Pure Lust. In these writings Daly continues to salute Beauvoir's work. In Pure Lust she writes that Beauvoir's work 'functioned as a beacon among women seeking to understand the connections among the oppressive evils they experienced...[it] helped to generate an atmosphere in which women could utter their own thought'.[162] In other words, Beauvoir functioned as a precedent: once the unspeakable had been uttered other women were able to begin to think through the problem of our subordinate status vis-a-vis men in the social hierarchy. Daly's assessment is undoubtedly accurate. A whole generation of feminist theorists would not have written what they did, in the way that they did, had it not been for Beauvoir's contribution. In the sheer breadth of her analytic vision Beauvoir set the feminist research agenda for over three decades and helped to create the conditions for a new tide of feminist awareness and activity. Similarly, in the Wickedary, Daly cites The Second Sex as an example of the work of 'Be-Friending': the 'weaving [of] a context/atmosphere in which Acts/Leaps of Metamorphosis can take place'.[163] Such a view is plausible and quite legitimate; for one may recognise the historical-political importance of a text without necessarily sharing its philosophical presuppositions.

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162 Pure Lust p.374.
163 The Wickedary p.64.

Chapter 3: Thomism

In the third chapter I shall investigate the nature and extent of Mary Daly's feminist interaction with Thomistic philosophy and theology. Aquinas was a towering intellectual presence in the Roman Catholic institutions through which Daly received her early education, and his writings later provided the subject matter for the two doctoral studies in Thomist theology and philosophy that she submitted at the University of Fribourg between 1959-66. The theses are available for scholars to study. Yet the influence of Thomism upon Daly's work is an area of research that has remained largely neglected by feminist commentators. Whilst certain writers have picked up the importance of Catholic discourse and worldview in explaining the fundamental disposition of Daly's thought,[1] none have taken the trouble to delve down to the philosophical roots of this worldview (particularly in the realms of ontology and epistemology) which lie, for Daly, in an interaction with the philosophical theology of Thomas Aquinas and the writings of his later expositors.

In recent work, Daly has acknowledged the importance of her background in Thomism.[2] She notes, first of all, that the philosophical *habitus*, the intellectual rigour and discipline, that enabled her feminist writing was acquired as a result of her Thomist training at Fribourg. Indeed: 'Without this training/experience', she states, 'I could not have written *Beyond God the Father*, *Gyn/Ecology*, *Pure Lust*, the *Wickedary*, or *Outercourse* '.[3] The schooling in Thomist thinking that she undertook between 1959-66 is described as her intellectual 'Labrys' (a double-headed axe wielded by the legendary Amazons), which allows her to 'cut through man-made delusions'.[4] But as she goes on to argue, the significance of her study of medieval scholastic philosophy and theology is not confined to 'the acquiring of a mere instrument of destruction'.[5] What she terms the 'athleticism of the mind' that she developed as a result of her studies functions not only as a critical weapon but also as 'a way of positively reclaiming what was deep and valuable in the tradition'.[6]

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1 See, for example, Carter Heyward 'Ruether and Daly: Theologians Speaking and Sparking, Building and Burning' in Christianity and Crisis volume 39, No. 5 (April 2, 1979), pp.66-73; Lynn Segal, op. cit., p.18.

2 Daly has also been influenced by St. Augustine, notably his idea that one may seek for knowledge of God in the recesses of memory (which in turn reflects the influence of the Platonic doctrine of reminiscence and the pre-existence of the soul). See the similarity between this idea and Daly's description of the process of anamnesia in Pure Lust p.85.

3 Outercourse p. 59.

4 Ibid., p. 75. C.f.: p. 60.

5 'New Intergalactic Introduction' Gyn/Ecology p.xxix.

6 Ibid.

Textual evidence for such a linkage is not hard to find. The most cursory readings of her feminist texts shows a clear vein of discursive continuities with Thomism running throughout her feminist texts. As we shall see in Beyond God the Father Daly takes up Thomistic constructs (such as Maritain's concept of the 'intuition of being'[7] and the notion of final causality)[8] that she considered to be useful in illuminating both the politics and the ontology of women's experiences of oppression and liberation. Later, in Pure Lust - which marks a return to an explicitly ontological analysis of women's situation after the 'metaethical' focus of Gyn/Ecology[9] - she reworks other features of Thomist discourse, notably Aquinas' theory of moral virtue[10] and the theory of angelic substances.[11]

The encounter with Thomism gives a particular stamp to her feminist *oeuvre*, particularly her overt ontological focus which sets her apart from many of the other leading feminist theologians. Ontological issues, such as the nature of the real, form an important part of her message and this in itself makes her work unusual amongst contemporary feminist theologians. When one turns to the listing for Be-ing in the Wickedary, for example, one finds a characteristically Dalyian appropriation of classical Western philosophical language. Be-ing is, she writes: '1: Ultimate/Intimate Reality, the constantly Unfolding Verb of Verbs which is intransitive, having no object that limits its dynamism 2: the Final Cause, the Good who is Self-communicating, who is the Verb from whom, in whom, and with whom all true movements move'.[12] The idea of Be-ing in this 'definition' stands to some degree in affinity with classical Western metaphysical notions. From Plato, for example, she understands Be-ing in terms of the self-diffusive form of the Good. With Aristotle she contends that Be-ing, as the Good, acts in the manner of final cause, drawing finite be-ing unto itself wherein it finds it fulfilment and completion. The language in which Daly articulates her understanding of reality is not confined, however, to the portfolio of words and concepts which are the conventional stock-in-trade of traditional metaphysicians. As her work develops she begins to experiment with metaphor and symbols in an effort to evoke, rather than simply conceptualise, the ultimately real. Synonyms for Be-ing include the 'Wild', the 'Unfolding' and the 'Goddess'. The philosophical tapestry which results from weaving these terms into the fabric of metaphysical discourse is powerful, imaginative and compelling.

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7 Beyond God the Father p.32.
8 See for example Pure Lust pps.132, 238.
9 Outercourse p.252.
10 Pure Lust pp., 216-218.
11 Ibid., pp.309-10.
12 The Wickedary p.64.

Within the context of the present study an inquiry into the connections between Daly's feminist theory and Thomism performs two important functions. Firstly, it offers a good example of the way in which Daly criticises a prominent Western intellectual tradition in terms of its 'androcentrism' (what I have termed male-stream bias). Secondly, it provides evidence for my thesis that the interaction between the development of Daly's feminist theory and male-steam theory is more complex than is sometimes thought. For whilst Daly's criticism of Aquinas is radical, in as much as the aforesaid bias penetrates right down to the level of Aquinas' metaphysical assumptions, she continues to draw intellectual sustenance from Thomism and to 'play' with elements in Aquinas' conceptual grid. Her continued engagement with this part of her heritage thus lends support to the idea that Daly's understanding of feminist separatism does not preclude an engagement with the male-stream intellectual heritage.

The scope for discussion in the space of one chapter is obviously limited. It would be impossible to discuss in detail every Thomistic 'survival' that is embedded in Daly's feminist writings. I can do no more here than begin a process of excavation which, it is hoped, will go part way to filling a gap in contemporary Dalyian research, as well as opening up a vein of possibilities for further exploration. In what follows I shall focus attention upon one particular element in Daly's feminist thinking: the theme of natural theological knowledge. I have chosen to highlight this aspect of her interaction with Thomism because it is crucial to her present feminist theological framework and provides a good example of both her synthesising ability with respect to discrete theoretical frameworks and the problems attending this activity.

The chapter is structured in the following manner. First, I shall give a brief introductory account of the training in Thomistic theology and philosophy undertaken by Daly at the University of Fribourg between 1959-66. Thomism was, and remains, a broad movement. A clarification of Daly's theological position a this point in her career is important. For though Daly moved away from the Thomistic method, the training that she received at Fribourg provides the context for her later attempts to bring Thomistic assumptions, concepts and themes into play in her feminist theory. The aim of the first part of the chapter is then to provide the reader with some indication of the nature of Daly's position within the 'Thomistic spectrum'.

Secondly, I shall move into a discussion of Daly's feminist criticism of Aquinas' androcentrism. Daly's first criticises Aquinas' work in the Christian feminist work The Church and the Second Sex. She was aware, when writing the book, of misogynist statements in Aquinas' writings (for example, that women are 'misbegotten males'), but she tends to dismiss such statements as 'incongruous' with the fundamental spirit of St. Thomas' thought which she considered to be essentially supportive of a 'liberal' feminist agenda. By the time Beyond God the Father had been published , however, a far more serious rupture with Aquinas' thought becomes apparent in her

criticism of the 'static worldview' . This mentality is precipitated from the idea, central to Aquinas' metaphysics, that true being is coterminous with immutability. It has functioned in a politically conservative way because it has facilitated an understanding of ultimate reality as fixed and changeless. Later, in Gyn/Ecology and Pure Lust, she extends her criticism of Aquinas' androcentrism to encompass his view of the Trinity, which she interprets as an ideologising of male-bonding, and the distinction between the orders of grace and nature, which she sees to be symptomatic of a 'patriarchal' subjectivity that takes flight from the concrete and the natural.

Thirdly, I shall turn to address Daly's constructive feminist retrieval of Thomistic philosophical-theological ideas, themes and concepts. This 'Plundering' activity, it should be noted, takes place in concert with the ongoing criticism of Aquinas. In certain respects her Plundering is problematic. Her attempt, in Beyond God the Father, to develop a feminist natural theology utilising Maritain's concept of the 'intuition of being' offers a good example. Daly takes up the concept of the intuition of being as part of her phenomenological description of feminist consciousness. The intuition, she avers, may be interpreted by women as a 'signal of transcendence'.[13] In other words, it suggests and evokes the possibility of an order of being which grounds and is yet utterly transcendent to women's existence. Aside from technical incongruities regarding the cognitive status of the intuition of being in her work the main difficulty with this appropriational strategy centres upon the utilisation of the concept as part of a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology begins with the data of consciousness and cannot move behind it to uncover the framework of interaction that makes an analysis possible. In other words the phenomenological approach is not equipped to explain the conditions of possibility for the encounter between the knower and the known that is the subject of description. As I shall attempt to show, Daly makes no attempt to offer a philosophical explanation of these conditions but simply refers back to a quasi-Thomistic framework of interaction.

Let us begin, then, by considering briefly the background against which Daly was later to re-engage with Aquinas' thought. Daly first encountered Aquinas' work in 1952. The thought of the Angelic Doctor formed part of the required course of study for the doctorate in Religion that she undertook at St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana. From that point on, Daly recalls, Aquinas became 'my teacher'.[14] It was not until 1959, however, that she was finally able to devote herself to an in depth study of Aquinas' thought. In that year she gained a place to study for the higher degrees in Catholic theology at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland. She had already applied, and been

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13 See p.148 in this thesis.
14 Outercourse p.51.

refused admission to Notre Dame.[15] (Women were forbidden access to courses that led to these degrees in Roman Catholic universities in the United States). The University of Fribourg, however, was state-controlled and therefore could not legally exclude women from entrance into the higher degree programmes. Daly duly completed the Baccalaureate in Sacred Theology in 1960 and the Licentiate in Sacred Theology in 1961 after which she embarked upon a doctoral dissertation in Sacred Theology, the subject of which was the question of 'speculative theology' in Aquinas' writings. The final examination for this degree took place in the summer of 1963. Daly passed *summa cum laude*. On completion of the project she enrolled on the course leading to the doctorate in philosophy. The ensuing dissertation, on the subject of 'natural' theology in the work of Jacques Maritain,[16] was defended in the spring of 1965.

Daly trained in Thomistic theology and philosophy at a time when the 'Neoscholasticism' of the Angelic Doctor reigned supreme in Roman Catholicism. The Thomistic ascendancy in the Church was at its height during the 1950s. Since the renewal of 'Christian philosophy'by pope Leo XII, in the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (4 August , 1879)[17] Aquinas' work had exceptional and unprecedented status in canon law, being elevated above all other philosopher-theologians in the Roman Catholic curriculum.[18] The Thomistic sun was to set only in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council. Until that point the 'Neoscholasticism' chiefly represented by Thomism provided the explanatory framework for the Catholic world-view or collective 'philosophy of life'. As the Catholic historian Philip Gleason writes: 'Neoscholasticism constituted the technical philosophical system that could be called on to explain, justify, and elaborate the interlinked, but technically informal, set of beliefs Catholics held concerning the nature of reality, the meaning of human existence, and the implications of these beliefs for personal morality, social ethics, political policy and so on'.[19] During the period 1879-63, then, the Roman Catholic Church employed variations on the Thomistic method in framing its response to modern politics and society in papal encyclicals, in seminaries, in Catholic educational institutions, and in public proclamations which have great significance in major areas of Catholic life. Aquinas' work had not always found such favour in the Church. His writings enjoyed great influence amongst the Catholic hierarchy at the Council of Trent

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15 Ibid., p.53.

16 Daly Natural Knowledge of God in the Philosophy of Jacques Maritain (Rome: Catholic Book Agency, 1966).

17 The establishment of Aquinas as the patron of studies in Catholic schools actually took place a year after *Aeterni Patris* , on 4 August, 1880 in the encyclical entitled *Cum hoc sit* .

18 Canon 1366, para. 2; c.f: 589, para. 1 states that: 'In the study of systematic philosophy and theology and in the formation of candidates for the priesthood in these subjects, profesors are to follow entirely the mind, doctrine and principles of the Angelic Doctor and to consider these principles as sacred'.

(held at various intervals between 1545 and 1563) where they were considered a yardstick for Roman Catholic orthodoxy: the Summa even being placed on the alter, along with the Scriptures and the Decretals, in order to counsel, guide and inspire the conclave.[20] However, his work was then largely neglected, along with the whole tradition of medieval scholasticism, as idealist philosophies and rationalist philosophies of Cartesian inspiration came to prominence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Thomism tended to be caught between two stools: being perceived by the post-Cartesian rationalists as lacking in 'scientific' reason, and by the traditionalists (who were seeking a consolidation ofthe faith after the upheaval of the French revolution in 1789) as far *too* rationalist.[21]

A clear picture of the nature of Daly's theological and philosophical views during the period of her training can be gleaned by examining the two doctoral dissertations submitted at the University of Fribourg. In The Problem of Speculative Theology: a Study in St. Thomas Daly defends Aquinas' 'intellectualist' approach to theology, criticising the 'antipathy for speculation' that she perceived in the writings of some influential Catholic theologians. Though she does not single out a particular theologian, the thesis can be read as a rejoinder to certain 'voluntarist' strains of metaphysics, notably Maurice Blondel's philosophy of action, with its stress on the 'willing will', and the 'intuitionism' of Henri Bergson. From another perspective The Problem of Speculative Theology may be interpreted as a response to Barth's famous challenge to 'natural' theology, which was still being felt in Catholic circles in the 1950s and 1960s. (Barth, of course, rejected every attempt to formulate a natural theology, all philosophical 'proofs' for God's existence, and every appeal to the analogy of being or so-called *'analogia entis'* (a phrase often used in connection with Aquinas' work but which was never employed by Aquinas, the term being popularised by Suarez).[22] Contra this theological position Daly argues that metaphysical speculation, including the inquiry into the possibility of 'natural' knowledge of God, functions as an indispensable supplement to

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19 Gleason, Philip Catholic Commission and Intellectual and Cultural Affairs Annual (University of Notre Dame Press, 1988) pp.15-25, at p.18.

20 *Aeterni Patris* The Study of Scholastic Philosophy p. 51.

21 For more detail on the decline of Thomism from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries see Leonard Boyle 'A Remembrance of Pope Leo XIII: The Encyclical*Aeterni Patris* ' One Hundred Years of Thomism

22 Barth writes: 'I regard the*analogia entis* as the invention of anti-Christ, and think that because of it one cannot become Catholic. Whereupon I at the same time allow myself to regard all other possible reasons for not becoming Catholic as short-sighted and lacking in seriousness'. Church Dogmatics (Edinburgh: T&T Clark) I, 1, viii-ix. Barth thought that *analogia entis* meant that with being as a common denominator man and God could be placed within the same genus. For Barth's position see Credo: a Presentation of the Chief Problems of Dogmatics with Referenceto the Apostles' Creed translated from the German by J. Strathearn McNab (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1936) (N.Y, 1962) pp.11-12, 40; Church Dogmatics II, 1 86-139, 149-58, 182-93. (tr.63-178). For a response to Barth and useful summary and defence of of *analogia entis* see Henri Bouillard The Knowledge of God translated by Samuel D. Femiano (London: Herder and Herder, 1969) p.104-112.

Scriptural revelation in the theological enterprise.[23] In defence of this position Daly draws upon Aquinas 'intellectualist' conception of theology as 'principally speculative'[24], that is, theology understood primarily in terms of the attainment of an intellectual *knowledge* of God. In doing so she accepts implicitly philosophical method and conceptual grid that together make up the metaphysical substructure of Aquinas' thought.

The method of this philosophical approach begins with the common data of human experience, the everyday round of observable facts and phenomena. In defending Aquinas' idea of theology as a 'speculative' enterprise then, Daly does not champion any form of 'rationalism'. Aquinas was not a theological rationalist. He did not think that the existence of God was self-evident.[25] Indeed, he spurned Anselm's Ontological argument and rejected Platonic epistemology with its assumption that the ideal world of Forms is somehow more real than particular objects . Instead he worked on the presupposition that all knowledge begins in sense experience. Although he could not be classified as an empiricist in the modern sense of the word, the foundations of his metaphysics are thoroughly empirical. The aim of the Thomist approach adopted by Daly is to arrive at the root causes of things or substances by reasoning beyond (meta) the physical to universal, necessary first principles. These principles are thence able to illuminate the meaning of being to a certain degree. The attainment of a natural knowledge of God, in particular, depends upon the intrinsic ability of concrete things to point beyond themselves. For Aquinas, and also for Daly at this point, the process of reflection and reasoning that takes us beyond the physical can lead to a disclosure of the 'existential' dependence of finite entities upon transcendent Being ('God'). So whilst we cannot deduce the existence of God from the word 'God' *qua* Anselm , we can *infer* the existence of God from the structure of the natural visible world (through the categories of motion, causality, contingency, hierarchy of beings, functionality etc.). This is the so-called 'outer' path to God, encapsulated in the famous 'Five Ways' or 'proofs' for the existence of God.[26]

Daly's utilisation of the Thomist metaphysical methodology implies in turn an acceptance of the conceptual substructure of Aquinas thought. In lending her support to the notion of 'speculative' theology she tacitly accepts, without any real question, a host of philosophical distinctions between Being and beings (*ipsum esse* and *entia*), and between essence and existence (*essentia* and *esse*) in created things, between matter and form, substance and accidents, act and potency etc. In fact Daly

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23 The Problem of Speculative Theology p.1.

24 Ibid., p.3.

25 *Summa Theologiae:* Latin text and English translation , introductions, notes, appendices and glossaries (ed.) Thomas Gilby and Thomas C. O'Brien (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1964-76) 1a, 2, 1, *sed. contra.*

26 Aquinas, op. cit., Ia, 2,3.

is heir to a host of concepts including: a view of reality in terms of 'a hierarchy of orders of being and perfection'; a conception of the beings-Being relation in terms both of participation (which means that creatures are wholly dependent of the first cause for their existence) and efficient causality (which presumes that creatures are the discrete effects of God's causal activity and are therefore 'real', 'distinct entities' with an 'intrinsic ontological principle of stability')[27]

The mode of Daly's defence of Aquinas' conception of 'speculative' theology allows us to place her work in a tradition of Thomist research. During the twentieth century renaissance of Thomistic thought a range of different interpretations of Aquinas' writings proliferated within the 'school' of Thomism.[28] Daly's work at this point can be located as lying within the tradition initiated by Pierre Rousselot , whose pioneering work *L'Intellectualisme de Saint Thomas*[29] located Thomas firmly in the 'intellectualist' camp with respect to his theology of beatitude and his theory of love.[30]

On a political level Daly used The Problem of a Speculative Theology as a vehicle to criticise anti-modernist tendencies with Neoscholasticism itself. For Daly the conception of theology as primarily speculative (rather than practical) functions as a safeguard against the notion that Catholic theology can in any way be introverted from the wider social realm. As she writes: 'Speculative theology in its most profound sense is totally incompatible with ultra-conservatism (the "heresy" par excellence because it is most opposed to the life of the spirit) '.[31] As I have already indicated, one of Daly's aims in elaborating the idea of speculative theology is to show that theological enterprise is intrinsically 'open to the real world, the world of experience' and that , as a consequence, she argues, theologians must acknowledge the 'need for growth and change'.[32] Viewed within the historical theological context of Roman Catholicism during the late 1950s/early 1960s then, the thesis can be read as an assault upon the theological stasis that was then associated with the forces of reaction within the Roman Catholic Church.

The metaphysical approach defended by Daly in The problem of Speculative Theology is reaffirmed in the thesis in philosophy: Natural Knowledge of God in the Philosophy of Jacques Maritain. Building upon the foundations laid in her first thesis she inquires as to whether 'the possibility of a truly metaphysical knowledge of God' has been adequately established by Maritain.[33]

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27 The Problem of Speculative Theology p.18.

28 See Helen James John The Thomstic Spectrum (N.Y: Fordham University, 1966).

29 Rousselot, Pierre *L'Intellectualisme de Saint Thomas* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1924).

30 For a discussion of this debate within the context of early twentieth century Thomism see Gerald McCool From Unity to Pluralism: The Internal Evolution of Thomism (N.Y.: Fordham University Press, 1989) pp. 39-56.

31 The Problem of Speculative Theology p.47.

32 Ibid., p. 47. See this thesis p.69.

33 Ibid., p.10.

She considers Maritain's approach to a natural knowledge of God in general, including his addition of a 'Sixth Way' to the 'Five Ways' of Aquinas and his formulation of the 'Ways of the Practical Intellect'. But her principle focus is upon Maritain's concept of 'the intuition of being'She adopts a standpoint basically in support of Maritain's approach. As in The Problem of Speculative Theology she finds his affirmation of the possibility of attaining a positive natural knowledge of God 'authentically Thomist'.[34] Moreover her defence of Maritain is once again contingent upon a prior acceptance of the structural features of Aquinas' system. Indeed, her only criticisms of Maritain's theory of the intuition of being occur in those areas where his adherence to Thomist method and principles is in doubt. For example, she holds that Maritain is 'ambivalent' in what he understands as the relation of the intuition of being to traditional Thomist metaphysics. The intuition seems to be vital for the metaphysician, yet, in itself, the experience transcends metaphysics altogether. Maritain's theory of intuition seems to be, on the one hand, 'pre-philosophical and attainable by non-philosophers' and yet, on the other hand, 'it is super-philosophical and transcends the proper sphere of metaphysics'.[35] In her response to this anomaly Daly defends the method and approach of traditional metaphysics and criticises the apparently facile way in which Maritain appears to think we can know God ('It is enough that things exist for God to be unavoidable').[36] She is critical of his implicit suggestion that the intuition of being might act as a 'substitute' (Daly's term) for the rigours of philosophical reasoning in attaining the object of metaphysics (that is, Being *qua* Being) on the grounds that this contravenes Aquinas' conception of the order of knowledge.[37] As a remedy for this problem she suggests 'the development and application of a theory of induction' pointing out that 'there is a basis for this in Thomism'.[38]

In the doctoral theses completed at the University of Fribourg, then, Daly accepts, without question, the Thomist metaphysical substructure. Indeed, in Natural Knowledge of God in the Philosophy of Jacques Maritain she continually 'tests' Maritain by comparing his statements and philosophical positions with those of Aquinas. It is as though Aquinas is seen by her to be the benchmark by which theological orthodoxy and philosophical sense are to be measured. This approach to the 'authority' of the Angelic Doctor reflects the hegemony of Thomist metaphysics in Roman Catholic theology and philosophy in the first half of the twentieth century.

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34 Natural Knowledge of God in the Philosophy of Jacques Maritain, pp. 49-53, p.60.

35 Ibid., p. 40, 44ff.

36 Ibid., p.126.

37 See *Summa Contra Gentiles* I, c.4 which again speaks of metaphysics as the last in a list of disciplines to be studied and mastered. See also *Summa Theologiae* I,1,1.

38 Natural Knowledge of God in the Philosophy of Jacques Maritain pps. 47, 130.

I turn now to my second task, which is to examine Daly's feminist criticism of the 'androcentric' bias of her *magister*. The first public expression of opprobrium with regard to Aquinas occurs three years after the submission of the thesis in philosophy, in The Church and the Second Sex , though she had largely written the book, in draft form, whilst she was living in Fribourg. What is important to note is that the criticism of Aquinas, in the book, is conditioned by her continuing theological and philosophical fidelity to Catholic tradition.

As an example of Aquinas' prejudice Daly cites the statement that women are 'defective' in the sphere of individual nature. Aquinas asserted that women were 'misbegotten males' whose existence was due to a fault in the male seed (which was seen as the active formal force in reproduction, woman providing passive matter) or to a material disorder or even to external agents such as the influence of the south wind. Women are included by Aquinas in *general* human nature but their importance is seen entirely in terms of their role in the reproductive process.[39] She further criticises the Angelic Doctor's idea of marriage and his defence of the exclusion of women from Holy Orders on the basis of the 'state of subjection' that, it is alleged, is natural to the female by virtue of her innate intellectual inferiority to men (a state that was not incurred at the Fall but was written into the order of the universe).[40]

Commenting on such a view of 'woman' Daly writes that Aquinas' 'whole mode of argument reveals a naïvely androcentric mentality which assigns what is properly human to the male and views sexual union as merely "carnal". Woman is seen as a sort of anomaly'.[41] Nevertheless woman had to be absorbed by Aquinas into his system in some way. The result is awkward and ill-fitting, as Daly shows in her analysis of his statements regarding *imago dei*. Aquinas thought that the image of God which is found in both men and women is, in a secondary sense, not found in woman: 'for man is the beginning and end of woman; as God is the beginning and end of every creature'.[42] The parallel between the sets man/woman and God/creature is intrinsically unacceptable and clashes violently with his original claim that the image of God in its chief sense is found in both sexes. As she writes:

> If woman has an intellectual nature, then her end cannot be man, for intellectuality is the radical source of autonomous personhood ... It is abundantly clear, therefore, that even according to Thomas's own principles, the alleged defectiveness of women, both as to their role in generation and considered as products of the generative process, becomes extremely difficult to uphold. Indeed, in the light of these principles it becomes impossible to uphold.

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39 The Church and the Second Sex p. 92.
40 Ibid., pp. 92-93.
41 Ibid., p. 93.

> According to Thomas, it is the intellectual soul which makes the human person to the image of God. This is neither caused by the male, nor is it essentially different in man and woman.[43]

But the effects of this criticism are muted by Daly's claim that such statements are incongruous with Aquinas' system considered as a whole. Ultimately, Daly argued, Aquinas' fundamental principles are 'radically on the side of feminism'.[44] She writes:

> The discord between the philosophical anthropology of Thomas and his androcentric statements is due to the then commonly accepted biblical exegesis, Aristotelian biology, and the prevailing image and social status of women. The deep roots of Thomas's thought - his philosophical conceptions of the body-soul relationship, of intellect, of will, of the person, and his theological ideas of the image of God in the human being and of man's last end - clearly support the genuine equality of men and women with all of its theoretical and practical consequences ... Today, fidelity to truth and justice requires that thinkers who are aware of these implications make them explicit, rather than parroting as 'Thomistic doctrine' harmful and untenable ideas which Thomas surely would not propose, were he alive today.[45]

At this point, then, Daly continued to defend the integrity of Aquinas' system over and against what she saw as isolated and discordant remarks. Indeed much of her defence of Christianity is based on an appeal to Thomistic philosophical concepts of natural law and natural justice above and beyond ecclesiastical structures.[46]

By 1973, however, Daly had severed her connections with the institutional Church and had rejected the Thomist metaphysical approach. In Beyond God the Father the ideal of equality between women and men is retained as a universal moral imperative, but references to Aquinas work are more muted and he is no longer treated as an 'authority' in theological or philosophical matters. Indeed, he is treated in the same manner as other religious authorities such as Augustine, Martin Luther, John Knox and Karl Barth whose 'crudely dehumanizing texts concerning women'

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42 Aquinas *Summa Theologiae* I 93, 4, ad.1; c.f. The Church and the Second Sex p. 93.
43 The Church and the Second Sex p.94.
44 Ibid., p. 95.
45 Ibid.
46 Roman Catholicism utilises the concept of natural law to decide moral and social issues not directly addresed in Scripture. One definition of natural law is 'the belief that there exists in nature and/or human nature a rational order which can provide intelligible value-statements independently of human will, that are universal in application, unchangeable in their ultimate content, and morally obligatory on mankind. These statements are expressed as laws or as moral imperatives which provide a basis for the evaluation of legal and political structures'. See Paul Sigmund Natural Law in Political Thought (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Winthrop, 1971).

are also criticised.[47] In this and subsequent works, then, there is no attempt at special pleading on Aquinas' behalf and he is criticised in the same manner as otherallegedly 'patriarchal' theologians.

What had happened in the intervening years to make Daly change her mind about the 'liberatory' potential of Aquinas' system of thought?Why did the once passionate Thomist now forsake her former intellectual commitments? There are, I believe, two major reasons to account for Daly's shift away from the Thomist framework position: the first concerns the burgeoning impact of the new 'radical' feminism upon her perception; the second concerns the theological implications of her departure from the Church.

Firstly, during the period 1968-71 Daly's feminist consciousness underwent a process of radicalisation, partly as a result of her own personal experiences, and partly as a result of her exposure to developments in feminist political theory.[48] One consequence of this was a shift in Daly's intellectual allegiances. 'Theory' across the disciplines was being questioned by radical women who found themselves excluded or existing only at the margins of traditional political philosophical writing. She began to doubt the capacity of the Thomist metaphysical approach - as well as more 'modern'metaphysical approaches such as Process thought[49] - to address the many theological and political questions that were only then beginning to surface among feminist women. In such a way she was led to question the whole Thomistic metaphysical schema in a way that would have been unthinkable only a few years earlier.

Secondly, Daly's suspicions regarding male-engendered 'theory' extended to the male-dominated institutions of Catholicism. The initial optimism generated in Daly by the *aggiornamento* of the Second Vatican Council gradually dissipated as she began to doubt the capability of the Catholic Church *qua* religious institution to transform itself into the kind of radical community envisaged in The Church and the Second Sex. In 1971, she finally left the Church. Daly's 'exodus' from the Church, coupled with her disillusionment with the methods of Christian theology, cemented a radical theological shift away from the biblical context in which Aquinas thinking was rooted and through which it was sustained. In Aquinas' writings Scriptural revelation is viewed to be fundamental to *sacra doctrina.*[50] The perception that Thomism appears to endorse the legitimacy, to a limited degree, of 'natural religion' and 'natural theology' is thus only ostensibly true.

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47 Beyond God the Father p.22.

48 See this thesis pps.20-21.

49 See her later article: 'The Courage to Leave: A Response to John Cobb's Theology' in D. R. Griffin and T.J.J. Altizer (eds.) John Cobb's Theology in Process (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977).

50 For a comprehensive monograph on the issue of the sources and methods of 'theology' (encompassing both '*theologia* ' or first philsoophy and '*sacra doctrina* ' or 'instruction proceeding from divine revelation') see Per Erik Persson Sacra Doctrina: Reason and Revelation in Aquinas translated from the Swedish by Ross Mackenzie (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1970).

Following authorities like Augustine, Aquinas believes that *revelation* provides the starting-point and rationale for theological work. Natural knowledge of God does have a place in *sacra doctrina* because it is not simply a necessary presupposition of revelation but is also confirmed, renewed and corrected by revelation. But supernatural revelation gives to theology a content that transcends the limitations of philosophy.[51] Aquinas has no place for 'natural' theology, if by this is meant speculation that would take precedence over revelation or exist independently of it and, as it were, go half-way before giving way to revelation.

Daly's disillusionment with the Thomistic synthesis reflected a wider discontent within Roman Catholicism. In the wake of the Second Vatican Council some Catholic thinkers began to move in alternative philosophical directions. This phenomenon had been preceded by developments both internal to Thomism and in the wider intellectual sphere, in the 1940s and 1950s, which worked against the Thomistic hegemony in Roman Catholicism.

In the wider intellectual sphere the impact of personalism, of phenomenology and existentialism on Catholic theology and philosophy for example was considerable at this point (notably in the influence of such thinkers as Heidegger, Jaspers and Sartre).[52] These philosophical movements launched a critique of essentialism and promoted a subjective and descriptive approach rather than the 'objective', analytic approach to reality traditionally the preserve of systematic metaphysics. The work of the Catholic philosopher Gabriel Marcel offers a good example of how existentialism, in particular, was affecting Thomist philosophy in the 1940s and 1950s.

Internally Thomism was coming to be seen more in terms of a spectrum of different philosophical and theological positions rather than the monolithic philosophical bulwark which acted as guarantor to the Roman Catholic social and political world-view.[53] Thus, whilst the first half of the twentieth century can be seen as something of a renaissance in Thomistic studies, the emergence of a multitude of different approaches and schools of thought within Thomism weakened its authority. The publication, in 1939, of a fifth edition of Etienne Gilson's *Le Thomisme*, with its new chapter on existence, and of Joseph de Finance's *Etre et Agir*, brought the dynamic act of existence to the forefront of Thomistic research. The widespread influence of these works signalled that the early conceptualism and essentialism that dominated the early renaissance of Thomistic

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51 For Augustine's view of the respective roles of Scripture and philosophy in theology see Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans A New Translation by Henry Bettenson with an Introduction by David Knowles (Harmonsworth: Penguin, 1972; first published 1467) XI, 2+ 3. For Aquinas' view see *Summa Theologiae* I, 1, 1 ; *Summa Contra. Gentiles* I, 4; and *De Veritate* 14, 11.

52 See W. Norris Clarke 'Thomism and Contemporary Philosophical Pluralism'Modern Schoolman LXVII/2, pp.123-139.

53 See Gerald A. McCool's analysis of four stages in Thomistic history in this century (1900-1914, 1918-1939 and 1945-1962) in 'Twentieth Century Scholasticism'Journal of Religion volume 58, pp.198-221.

philosophy in the first few decades of the twentieth century was coming finally to be replaced by the centrality of the dynamism of the act of existence itself in Thomistic interpretations of Aquinas' work. Other philosophical developments in the interpretation of Aquinas' work included a renewed interest in importance of Neoplatonic elements, principally the notion of participation, in the writings of Cornelio Fabro, Ferdinand van Steenbergen and, in the United States, W. Norris Clarke; and the post-Kantian turn to the subject in the transcendental Thomism founded by Joseph Marechal and Pierre Rousselot.

It was partly as a result of these philosophical developments that Thomism came to be dethroned as the dominant force in Catholic culture. The process reached its climax during and after the Second Vatican Council, whose 'Decree on Priestly Formation' omits direct reference to Aquinas and mentions only 'the perennially valid philosophical heritage'.[54]

What is novel about Daly's situation relative to that of other Catholic thinkers at this time is that it is a sustained recognition of Aquinas' sexism that provides the impetus for criticism of his whole framework. We have already examined The Church and the Second Sex. Let us turn now to consider Daly's treatment of Aquinas inBeyond God the Father. Here she singles out for criticism Aquinas' views on prostitution,[55] and regurgitates her former criticism of his view of women's deficiency with regard to reason.[56] She argues that in the prevailing social and intellectual climate, wherein those engaged in the practice of academic theology are under pressure to bow to the wisdom of such 'experts', these misogynist incongruities have either been disregarded or else glossed over as trifling and immaterial rather than being seen to indicate 'a serious credibility gap'.[57] In The Church and the Second Sex she had excused Aquinas' description of women as 'misbegotten males' as inessential, even contrary, to the rest of his system.In Beyond God the Father, however, she views the patriarchal context of these kinds of statements as 'deeply relevant to the worldview in which such "authorities" have seen other seemingly unrelated subjects, such as the problem of God'.[58] In other words, she now considers Aquinas' view of women to say something about his fundamental worldview which, in turn, raises questions about their conceptualisation of everything - including God.

Towards the end of Beyond God the Father Daly gives a concrete indication as to the way in which she thinks that the substructure of Thomist metaphysics is out of joint. Her central claim is as follows: in his understanding of the concept of Being Aquinas draws upon the Parmenidean idea

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54 *Optatam Totius*, art.15.
55 Beyond God the Father pp. 60-61.
56 Ibid., p.101.
57 Ibid p.22.

of true being as essentially immutable. This idea, Daly suggests, encourages a 'static' understanding of God which has then functioned politically so to inhibit social change.[59] This conception of being, she argues, mirrors and produces a patriarchal perspective.

Daly focuses her critical attention upon the understanding of 'efficient' and 'final' causality in classical metaphysics. The concept of the final cause is originally of Aristotelian provenance and forms part of the theory of the four causes by means of which philosophers analysed the metaphysical question of change and becoming. The four causes are material, formal, efficient and final. The material cause is the 'stuff' out of which a thing is made, as the wood out of which a table is created. The formal cause constitutes that which makes a thing what it is; the 'tableness' of a table is given in a particular kind of shape or design plan. The efficient cause concerns the agent of the action; so the carpenter is the efficient cause of a table. The final cause is that purpose behind the action; in the case of the manufacture of a table the final cause is the goal of having a structure at which to eat one's meals. Another name for the final cause is first cause since it initiates the agent's movement.

The theory of the four causes is, she maintains, the product of 'a society encased in a static worldview, lacking any sense of evolution'.[60] In Aristotelian philosophy, for example the efficient cause/agent actualises 'a potential that is already present'.[61] Thus it is only by virtue of the fact that cold water already has the potential to become hot that it can become so. Daly's point is that such a philosophical context forbids the idea that there can be any 'qualitative leap into the future'.[62] Within this metaphysic, she writes: 'there is literally nothing new under the sun'.[63] There is a certain dynamism, to be sure, but it is circular and nonprogressive.

The same is true of the conception of final causality. The reason why the final cause attracts or instils a desire in the agent to act towards a particular end is that the end is apprehended as a good. As Daly observes, this idea of final causality would seem to be intrinsically dynamic. In the 'static worldview', however, the metaphysical categories of being and becoming form a dichotomy. 'The Greeks', she writes, ' identified the concept of "the good" with the Parmenidean conception of "true being", which is changeless and already present'.[64] This means that: 'The goal of every action,

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58 Ibid.
59 Ibid., pp.180-185. C.f.: The Church and the Second Sex p.183.
60 Ibid., p.181.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid., pp.181-182.

therefore, already is. The future is essentially closed'.[65] This metaphysical schema was appropriated by Aquinas who acknowledged a mental though not a metaphysical distinction between good and true being. In his understanding of the way in which creatures create Aquinas reproduced the Aristotelian view that one can only create from extant matter and only insofar as the innate potentiality of the object allows. Daly acknowledges that in his understanding of divine causality Aquinas comes closer to a more dynamic view. For, according to his Christian philosophy God creates *ex nihilo*, out of nothing, and sustains creatures in their existence. Indeed, there is no distinction between God's creating and sustaining energies: the essence of God and the exercise of God's powers are identical. The only distinction that pertains here is in the human mind rather than in God. God's causal activity is not therefore dependent, as is that of creatures, upon pre-existing matter. This would seem to offer the prospect of an infinitely open future. In Daly's view, however, this implicit dynamism is hindered by the identification of God/Being as the immutable source from whom all things emanate and towards which all thing ultimately return.

This worldview represented by Aquinas and the whole classical metaphysical tradition is stagnant and immobile. The metaphysics summarised in the phrase 'there is nothing new under the sun' has, in turn, encouraged a static society. It does this by 'domesticating' becoming 'under the reign of reified "being" which can represent "things as they are" to the consciousness of the privileged who want it that way',[66] thereby helping to perpetuate political conformity.[67]

Such a metaphysics reflects the *Weltanschauung* of what anthropologist Margaret Mead has termed a 'postfigurative culture' in which, as Daly puts it, 'one could look to one's grandparents and parents as models, seeing one's own future being acted out in their lives'.[68] But this worldview is now culturally redundant. Mead's 'postfigurative culture' belongs to the past. In contemporary, culturally pluralist society individuals are more free to create their own life-styles and to formulate their own values and goals, often in sharp contrast to those advocated by their forebears. In Daly's view the new sense of freedom-toward-the future which has taken hold of the Western imagination since the Enlightenment, and particularly in the wake of Darwin's theory of evolution in the mid-nineteenth century, requires an equally liberating metaphysical base. For she believes that it is only by moving towards an understanding of Be-ing as that 'in which we participate actively by a qualitative leap of courage in the face of patriarchy", then 'the magic collar that was choking us is

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65 Ibid., p.182.
66 Ibid., p.184.
67 The utilisation of the classical philosophical terminology of 'essence' and 'nature' in debates to counter progressive political arguments with respect to the freedom and rights of women and other persecuted groups well illustrates the reactionary uses to which classical metaphysics has been put. C .f.: Pure Lust pp.29-30.
68 Beyond God the Father p.184.

shattered'.[69] Hence her desire, in Beyond God the Father, to change 'the conception/perception of god from "the supreme being" to Be-ing'.[70] Out of the ashes of Daly's criticism of the metaphysics of immutable being arises a new understanding of Be-ing. In counterposition to this view of Being Daly thinks that the fundamental dynamism of the final cause will only be shown, in terms of ontology, when philosophy is liberated from the 'Parmenidean delusory dichotomizing of becoming and being'.[71] In effect this means an abandonment of the Thomist metaphysical grid.

In Gyn/Ecology Daly continues to criticise the static worldview in terms of the exitus-reditus scheme that was central to the work of Aquinas and other medieval Christian thinkers.[72] Here the political ramifications of the ontology are developed. She selects Aquinas' doctrine of the Trinity for special attention, reading the 'processions' within the Godhead as 'a circular pattern for muted existence : separation from and return to the same immutable source'.[73] But she amplifies this criticism by reference to the three 'Persons' of the Trinity all of whom she sees as symbolically male (even the allegedly 'feminine' symbol of the Holy Spirit). In her critical reading Daly contends that the processions of the Divine Persons is '"sublime" (and therefore disguised) erotic male homosexual *mythos* , the perfect all-male marriage, the ideal all-male family, the best boys' club, the model monastery, the supreme Men's Association, the mold for all varieties of male monogender mating'.[74] Not only is the Trinity symbolic of the static worldview but this worldview is, in turn, a thoroughly masculinist conception. It is both a product and a reflection of the social phenomenon of male-bonding. The essential 'message' that it mediates is that social networking and relationships between men are validated by reference to ultimate reality. There is, of course, no corresponding model for women in their relationships with each other.

In Pure Lust Daly singles out other aspects of Aquinas' work for criticism. In particular she attacks Aquinas' concept of beatitude *post-mortem* and the distinction between nature and grace, both ideas that she had defended in her doctoral theses.[75] She notes that for Aquinas perfect happiness consists in 'man' employing his 'highest' power (intellect) in order to know its 'highest' object (God). But since a knowledge of God's essence is not possible through natural reason an 'infusion' of grace is needed in order to 'elevate' reason such that it can attain its object. Criticising this notion Daly writes:

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69 Ibid., p. 189.
70 Ibid. 'Original Reintroduction' p. xvii.
71 Ibid., p.183.
72 Gyn/Ecology p.37.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid., p.38.
75 Pure Lust p.144.

> This idea of happiness after death is a confession and legitimation of male impotence. It is by no means a woman-originated doctrine. Women do not experience a need for a supernaturally stimulated eternal erection. As impotent beings patriarchal males do have this need, which they have erected religiously as the requirement for happiness. It will be noticed that the eternal copulation under scrutiny here is a male homoerotic relationship. The sons seek union with their male god, who is frozen forever as the dominant partner in this pathetically unequal union.[76]

Daly appears to be suggesting here that the traditional Christian doctrine of supernatural grace is a reflection of a fundamental and pathological lack in 'patriarchal males', a lack that makes them seek 'happiness' beyond the natural realm of which they are members. This desire is connected rhetorically with dominant aspects of male sexuality, specifically with erection and copulation. The hoped for union however is between males of different rank, implicitly it is an incestuous relationship between father and son. By contrast Daly is more interested in 'the unfolding of our own native capacities'.[77] She continues:

> ... women become increasingly aware that the impediments to our attainment of happiness are not innate deficiencies. Wild women do not share the phallocratic male's problem of impotence and thus do not have the need to fantasize an eternal connection with an omnipotent being. Metamorphosing women recognize that our happiness is indeed a *life of activity* . In a special way happiness is activity of the mind, or contemplation. It can include many activities: artistic creation, political action, development of spiritual powers, athletic activities. These are a few facets of our many-sided Unfolding, our holistic Realization of Be-Longing, that is, our Happiness.[78]

A distinction is made then between the subjectivity of 'patriarchal males', which is seen as incapable of experiencing be-ing in and through the course of their own practical and intellectual activities, and 'women' who are coming precisely to experience the 'Unfolding' of Be-ing through their own acts.

It is in Pure Lust that Daly attacks the self-definition of metaphysics or first philosophy as the science of being *qua* being and questions the way in which philosophers and theologians in the Western tradition have attempted to conceptualise or to 'think' Be-ing (as Heidegger might say). She writes: 'Traditionally it [first philosophy] has attempted to deal with the most primary philosophical questions. Yet the questions have been framed/confined within parameters that fail to express

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76 Ibid., p. 339.
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid., pp.339-340.

biophilic intuitions. They are framed by the word *being* itself'.[79] What is it in the word 'being' that blocks the most fundamental philosophical enquires? It is the implicit and perhaps subliminal reduction of the ultimate verb to the level of finite entity or noun. 'Thought that starts with the noun, being ', she writes, 'cannot go behind it - cannot transform/transfer itself into Realms of Metabeing. Such thought is stuck, fixated, fixed and thus does not actively participate in Powers of Be-ing'.[80] She rejects the metaphysical privileging of being over becoming in the Parmenidean tradition in favour of a metaphysics in which the two are seen in terms of each other. 'Be-ing' - as she now frames it - is thus understood to be inherently dynamic, superabundant and constantly unfolding. Why must "God" be a noun?', she asks:

> Why not a verb - the most active and dynamic of all? Hasn't the naming of 'God' as a noun been an act of murdering that dynamic Verb? And isn't the Verb infinitely more personal than a mere static noun? The anthropomorphic symbols for God may be intended to convey personality, but they fail to convey that God is Be-ing.[81]

Be-ing encompasses and engulfs with healing power the false dichotomy between "true being" and becoming, revealing its unreality.[82] Daly rejects the notion of God as 'hypostasized transcendence', as *a being* - even a Supernatural Being - which would simply make God an item within the universe, a *thing* among other things, drawing instead upon the language of God as dynamic verb, the continual overflowing of Being though ceaseless action.

What then of Daly's constructive retrieval of Thomistic concepts? In the search for a way forward theologically Daly turned back, not unnaturally perhaps, to explore further the central ideas in her doctoral theses regarding natural theological knowledge of God. Of special importance to Daly's agenda in Beyond God the Father is Maritain's concept of the 'intuition of being' which she uses as a way by which to forge a link between ultimate reality and what she perceived as the fundamental dynamics of the feminist movement.

To begin with Daly employs the concept of the intuition of being within a broadly phenomenological rather than metaphysical frame of reference. Undoubtedly Daly's search for alternative theological method and criteria was influenced by the demand for a more 'existential' rather than a speculative approach to theological questions that was then voicing itself in liberal theological circles, both Protestant and Catholic. Evidence of such a methodological shift is discernible in an article, in 1969, entitled 'Return of the Protestant Principle'. At this time Daly still

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79 Pure Lust p.29.
80 Ibid., pp. 29-30
81 Ibid., pp. 33-34.
82 Ibid., p. 183.

identified as a Thomist, yet here she explores the work of the German Protestant theologian Paul Tillich in the context of a discussion of the future shape of Christianity. In this article she takes up Tillich's idea of a 'theonomous synthesis' of Protestant principle and Catholic substance. The central problem of faith, Daly writes, is 'the problem of discovering transcendent meaning within limited and changing forms of thought and action, within our culture'.[83] Revelation thus presupposes a 'plane of insight which enables us to discover transcendent meaning in our concrete situation, and to transform our situation so that it becomes more transparent to this transcendent meaning'.[84] The plane of insight that Daly refers to here is not made clear, but it would seem to refer to some kind of phenomenological approach, that is, an approach that investigates the 'concrete situation' (described by phenomenologists as the *Lebenswelt* or the lived experience of being in the world) in order precisely to uncover the hidden, submerged and obscure structures and characteristics of human being.[85]

In Beyond God the Father Daly takes up such an approach as an alternative to the methodology of speculative metaphysics. Unlike Tillichean phenomenology, however, Daly 's phenomenological mapping (later metaphorised under the rubric of the Soul Journey) consists in a philosophical meditation upon the meanings inherent in the experiences of a particular community, namely, the 'women's movement'. This is because what has hitherto counted as human experience has in fact been exposed by feminists as a reflection of male experience only. The feminist enquiry with regard to Being then (feminist ontology) will be grounded in the structures of being made manifest in and through the lived experiences of women, most particularly in the set of experiences undergone by women in the feminist process of 'consciousness-raising'. This phenomenology provides an alternative justification for women's continued use of religious-theological language. The key claim advanced is that the continued use of religious and theological language for postchristian women is legitimated by the conviction that a manifestation or disclosure of the 'sacred' (ontophony) occurs in and through women's struggle for personal and collective liberation.

The ontological experience through which this disclosure occurs involves an 'intuition of being'. In Beyond God the Father uses Maritain's concept to describe the second moment of a unique ontological experience. She writes: 'This experience in its first phase is one of nonbeing. In its second phase it is an intuition of being which, as Jacques Maritain described it is a *dynamic* intuition'.[86] Note the order: we experience the shock of the lack of the fullness of being in

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83 Daly, 'Return of the Protestant Principle'Commonweal 90 (6th June, 1969), pp.339.
84 Ibid.. pp.339-40.
85 For a description of phenomenological hermeneutics see Langdon Gilkey Naming the Whirlwind: the Renewal of God- Language (Indianapolis and New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1969) p.192, n.2.
86 Beyond God the Father p.32

consciousness before we are led to an awareness of our participation in being. As Daly noted in her doctoral thesis in philosophy, the experience of the intuition of being may follow certain experiences, including those such as 'anguish' and 'fidelity' that have been analysed by the existentialist ontologists like Martin Heidegger and Gabriel Marcel. In Daly'swritings the intuition may also follow certain 'limit-experiences' thatshe believes are a feature of feminist living.[87] These experiences give to women what she calls (following Peter Berger) 'signals of transcendence'.[88] Daly encourages women to look at their experiences of 'nonidentity' in patriarchal society in ontological terms as the experience of 'nothingness' or 'nonbeing'. The experience of nonbeing is concretised in loss of jobs, friends, social approval, health, meaninglessness etc. Women must face these experiences by questioning those roles which have given them such security at the price of their inner alienation. Once women perceive nothingness in themselves they are correspondingly able to grasp intuitively that this state is not simple negation of Being but rather a *privation* , that is, it is a lack of 'something' (Being) that ought to be there. The only way out of nothingness is then 'self-actualization in spite of ever-present nothingness'.[89]

Daly goes on to show the religio-theological implications of these experiential situations in women's lives. They bear huge symbolic significance insofar as in and through them a world of sense beyond oppression is revealed, another dimension to reality reveals itself. This is encapsulated when she writes: What I am proposing is that the emergence of the communal vocational self-awareness of women is a *creative political ontophony* . It is a manifestation of the sacred (*hierophany*) precisely because it is an experience of participation in being, and therefore a manifestation of being (*ontophony*)'.[90] Another way of articulating this point is to say that women's experience of the intuition of being functions as a new affirmative way to knowledge of God. In Aquinas' rendering of the affirmative way God is assumed to exemplify every perfection enjoyed by creatures and that therefore any perfection found in creatures that is not by definition limited (such as goodness and wisdom) may be predicated of God.[91] This argument is contingent upon an acceptance of God as the first cause of everything in existence and also the idea that effects in some

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87 The phrase 'limit-experience' is useful in unravelling Daly's approach and allows the reader to identify the locus of her approach with some clarity. My usage of the the term owes to David Tracy's work in Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology (New York: Seabury Press) p.105-109. For the delineation of 'limit'experiences' in the everyday realm seePeter L.Berger A Rumour of Angels:Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural (London: Penguin, 1969).

88 C.f. this thesis p.148-149.

89 Beyond God the Father p. 23

90 Ibid., pp.34-5.

91 Ibid., p.38.

way resemble their causes. In Daly's neo-affirmative way Daly posits a 'living analogy of being' in the experience of courage that attends women's struggle for liberation. She writes:

> [What] I am pointing to by the use of the expression 'analogy of being' is the experience of the dynamic content of the intuition of being as experienced in existential courage. Women now have a special opportunity to create an *affirmative* way that is not simply in the arena of speculation, but especially in the realm of active self-affirmation. Since through the existential courage now demanded of us we can have consciousness of being toward the image of God, this process can give us intimations of the Be-ing in and toward which we are participating. That is, it can be in some sense a theophany or manifestation of God.[92]

In the 'ontological affirmation of self' that Daly sees as intrinsic to feminism there is a 'dynamism' that 'reaches out toward the nameless God'.[93]

The confrontation with non-being in the feminist process is not the only arena for the experience of the intuition of be-ing. In Outercourse Daly testifies that she has possessed, from an early age, a quasi-mystical sense for the miracle of 'Be-ing' in the realm of nature. Indeed, with hindsight she thinks that her desire to study Maritain's Thomist philosophy was really a 'subliminal' desire 'to understand the meaning and implications of my own intuition of be-ing for my own philosophical Quest - for my own be-ing'.[94] She relates instances of what she later interprets as the experience of this intuition in her childhood and early adulthood. Whilst she lay on the grass one summer day, for example, a clover blossom, 'Announced its be-ing to me. It Said starkly, clearly, with utmost simplicity: "I am." It gave me an intuition of be-ing.'.[95] On another occasion she had a similar experience: 'This time the Speaker was a hedge on the campus [of St. Mary's College, Notre Dame] ... The hedge added to the message given me years before. It not only Announced its be-ing to me. The hedge Said: "Continued existence"'.[96] Commenting on this 'revelation' Daly writes: 'The words imply something like "I was, and am, and will be."'. The communication from the hedge was, she states, a harbinger of Metamemory, the 'Deep, ecstatic Memory of participation in Be-ing ... Spiraling into the Past, carrying Vision forward; memory that recalls Archaic Time, Re-Calling it into our be-ing ...'.[97]

There are certain problems with Daly's feminist theological employment of Maritain's concept. In particular there are difficulties surrounding the use of the intuition of being within the

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92 Ibid., pp. 38-39.
93 Ibid., p. 33.
94 Outercourse n.3, p.418.
95 Ibid., pps.23, 41.
96 Ibid., p.51.
97 Ibid., p.52.

context of feminist consciousness raising. There is no mention, in Daly's account, for example, of the 'three intellective leaps' that together constitute Maritain's intuition of being: the leap to sheer existence as it exists independently of me; from this existence to my own existence teetering on the edge of nothingness; and from this threatened state to pure or absolute existence.[98] By contrast the 'ontological experience' that Daly refers to is seen to occur in two phases: in the first phase the experience is one of nonbeing, in the second phase moves over into an experience of the intuition of being. It is through the latter that she thinks we are able to gain an immediate apprehension of the analogy of being and thus, in some sense, of Being itself. But it is unclear how the first phase of Daly's experience is related to the intellective leaps that constitute Maritain's intuition of being. The experience of nothingness is part and parcel of Maritain's conception of the intuition. Daly fails to specify how the two 'moments' of the ontological experience that she describes gel together.

The major philosophical problem, however, concerns Daly's uncritical reference back to Thomistic structures which are seen to secure the possibility of the experience of the intuition of being. In itself Daly's phenomenological approach can only describe what is already given in consciousness. It cannot show or elucidate the very conditions that allow the kind of encounter described by Daly in terms of the intuition of being. As the Thomist scholar Norris Clarke has pointed out, phenomenology is not equipped to deal with fundamental questions such as: 'How come there is a framework at all of this actually existing world (or *Lebenswelt* , if you wish) plus a self-conscious knowing subject, so intrinsically attuned to one another that one can be known by the other'.[99] This framework of interaction between the knower and the known must be assumed or presupposed before analysis can begin. 'For, to recognize the presentation of the object in consciousness as the sign of a real being presenting itself, the mind must interpret the action and point back through it, in an act of *interpretive judgement* to the real source existing in itself *beyond* our consciousness'.[100] This takes us into the realms of a metaphysics of being and knowledge. In Daly's case the conditions that allow for the possibility of an encounter with Be-ing are not treated in any systematic manner. What is striking is that Daly makes no 'original' attempt to offer a philosophical explanation of these conditions but simply 'Plunders' the Thomistic framework of interaction that was given in outline in the summary of The Problem of Speculative Theology - a framework that includes the conception of the creator-creature relation in terms both of participation, efficient causality and final causality and a realist epistemology.

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98 See Natural Knowledge of God in the Philosophy of Jacques Maritain p. 11-12.
99 Clarke, W. Norris, op. cit., p.130-31.
100 Ibid.

Thus Daly continues to work with a quasi-Thomist understanding of our relation to Being in terms of the principles of participation and efficient causality. For Daly 'God is Be-ing;'[101] elsewhere she conceptualises God/Goddess in terms of 'the power of being' in whose potency we 'participate'.[102] Moreover as well as the notion of participation Daly presumes something like efficient causality in her understanding of free,[103] robust creatures existing in their own right whilst yet remaining wholly dependent upon the creating, sustaining activity of their first cause (God). This idea would appear at first sight to be something of an anomaly. In Aquinas' system, however, not only is the power of God compatible with freedom of the creature, it is indispensable to it. The manner in which the divine causality operates is indicated by Aquinas in *Summa Contra Gentiles* III, 70 where he writes: 'The one and the same effect is produced by the subordinate cause and by God, directly by both, though in a different way'. God then is intimately present in the midst of change and movement which is the hallmark of the created world in the interplay of cause and effect. The obverse side to this doctrine is, of course, that creatures owe the existence of this very principle to God's existential activities. It is these concepts of participation and efficient causality which Daly argued, in The Problem of Speculative Theology, were conditional to securing the possibility of a natural knowledge of God.

It is this view of efficient causality that leads her to favour a view of the social order as rooted in some way in the 'metaphysical order', the order of beingIt is precisely because patriarchal values are not themselves rooted in the processes which go to preserve and sustain all existence that they are dangerous to life (necrophilic) and must be opposed. She maintains, of course, that her set of values are rooted in the great force of Nature which itself takes its origin from the transcendent ground of all existents (God). However there is the sense that history is working against her. She is not naively optimistic, but realises that her work is the result of a situation of extremity.

Another conditional element for the attainment of a natural knowledge of God in Thomism is the principle of teleology. As with the concepts of participation and efficient causality Daly retains in her writing the sense of our human openness and ordination to the transcendent. Like Aquinas and the rest of the scholastics she thinks that we are created with an innate capacity for intimacy with God/Being and a corresponding desire for it. For Aquinas 'Man is ordained to God as

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101 Beyond God the Father pp. 33-34.

102 Ibid., pp. 28-29. For the notion of participation in Daly's writings see for example Pure Lust pps. 26, 87, 147, 292, 393.

103 In Natural Knowledge of God in the Philosophy of Jacques Maritain p.60 Daly cites the definition of freedom as this has been given by Aristotle and endorsed by Aqiunas in *Comm. in Metaph.* I, 1.3, n.58 as: 'That man is properly said to be free who does not exist for the sake of another but for himself'.

his origin and end'.[104] There is in other words a natural desire in humankind for God, a *desiderium naturale*.[105] The *desiderium naturale* is only possible because of teleology - the idea that all actions are end-directed or purposive. According to the teleological view actions are judged to be 'good' or 'bad' depending upon whether they fulfil or attain their goals. The existence of teleology (or final causality) in the world was one of Aquinas ways to God. For him there is a dialectic between this world and the supernatural world. The 'telos' of human beings can only lie in another realm, another order of being. Yet this is a reality now in that it is present and at work. It is the inner subjective drive which corresponds to the drawing power, the Final Cause, of Be-ing as the Good. Everything in Aquinas' thought is treated under the aspect of divinity; either because it is God in Godself or because everything is ordered towards God as the beginning and end of things. God is related to absolutely everything. All created beings, every event, every nature is thus an object for theology. All created beings and even historical moments are 'ontologically closed and sealed at both ends' by the twin aspects of God as Creator and God as the Final End towards which all things tend. The orientation of this desire or telos for expansion is seen by Daly to be equivalent to the process of coming-to-self which she associates with the ultimate happiness.[106] In the Wickedary the Final Cause is defined as 'the indwelling, always unfolding goal or purpose, perceived as Good and attracting one to Act, to Realize her own participation in Be-ing'.[107] For Daly feminism is at its ontological roots an expression of the *desiderium naturale* in as much as it represents the desire for the expansion of our being towards the horizon of the infinite. This desire she calls 'Pure Lust', an 'ontological yearning', a 'Be-Longing'.[108] It is this 'Deep ontological purposefulness, or telic centring' that, she claims, is the target of phallic lust: 'Final causality, in this profound sense, is the object of attack within phallocratic society'.[109] The struggle to free women is imaged in terms of a religious battle, on a cosmic scale, between being and nonbeing, between good and evil though these pairs are not to be construed as opposites because, as Daly writes, Be-ing the Verb is 'intransitive' and does not require an other over and against itself in order to realise itself. Rather is the second half of the pair ontologically dependent upon the first; nonbeing is not a reality in and of itself but signifies a lack of reality or Be-ing. This is not to say that the evil of patriarchy is merely an illusion nor an ontological lacuna. The reality of the evil lies precisely in the perverse,

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104 *Summa Theologiae* I, i, a.7.
105 For the idea of 'desiderium naturale' in Aquinas see*Summa Theologiae* I, 75, 6; *Summa Contra Gentiles* II, 55.
106 C.f.: the following texts in Aquinas' workin which the end of this longing is Beatitude: *Summa Theologiae* I,12; I/II 2,8; 3,8. See also Per Erik Persson, op. cit., pp.263ff.
107 The Wickedary p.76.
108 Pure Lust p. 318.

inauthentic or disordered character of the be-ing that is manifested. Patriarchy, then, is un-real in the strict ontological sense and yet real in its effects, which are disastrous for all be-ing. Her whole feminist agenda revolves around this desire to break out, to delimit the self in ever expanding movement toward the Final Cause which is 'always/all ways beckoning'.[110]

This whole edifice also presupposes a certain epistemology. Like Aquinas, Daly thinks it imperative that philosophy starts with being not with thought or sentiment. That the material world exists is immediately evident and knowledge is built up on the basis of sense-information. In Beyond God the Father Daly argues that we must remove 'the impediments to that realm of knowing which is subjective, affective, intuitive, or what the Scholastics called "connatural"'.[111] For it is only by virtue of our participation in Be-ing that we can know anything at about it: 'Real knowledge implies participation...'.[112] In Pure Lust she explicitly rejects modern variants of 'nominalism' in favour of a version of 'classical realism' - the idea that 'universals have a real existence outside the mind. This was the epistemological tradition of Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas.[113] The doctrine of nominalism was given classic expression in the work of late medieval philosopher William of Ockham. For Ockham language is a democratic convention between free individuals who reach understanding between themselves on the meaning of each word and concept. Ockham posited the real existence of particulars only and denied the reality of universals such as 'tree' or 'chair' or 'air' which he saw merely as labels or vocalisations. Daly repudiates nominalist epistemologies precisely because they are predicated upon the assumption that 'only the individual has reality' and this in effect, 'negates participation'.[114] She writes: 'To Sin against the society of sado-sublimation is to be intellectual in the most direct and daring way, claiming and trusting the deep correspondence between the structures/processes of one's own mind and the structures/processes of reality. To Sin is to trust intuitions and the reasoning rooted in them'.[115] From Thomism, then, Daly takes the presupposition that we know things because things have the structure of 'being knowable', that is to say that in the process of knowing she presupposes the mutual participation of the knower and the known.

To repeat: Daly makes no attempt to justify these ideas in her own philosophical terms but simply appropriates them lock, stock and barrel. How is this to be explained given her criticism of

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109 Ibid., p. 2.
110 The Wickedary p.277.
111 Beyond God the Father p. 39.
112 Ibid., p.xv.
113 Though each thinker differs in the version of realism that they uphold. See Pure Lust p.160-161.
114 Ibid., p.161.
115 Ibid., p.152.

Aquinas' androcentrism and the static worldview that, in her opinion, was spawned from the classical metaphysical categories with which Aquinas and all the medieval thinkers worked? There is a sense - paradoxical perhaps - that her criticism of Aquinas is rooted in a mystical 'sense' for the dynamism of Being that she first encounters intellectually through her reading of Aquinas. It is as though she finds hints, or echoes of something in Aquinas which his metaphysical categories fail ultimately to articulate. Something along these lines is hinted at by Daly in the 'Feminist Postchristian Introduction' to the second edition of The Church and the Second Sex. Commenting on her own defence of Aquinas fundamental principles in the book she writes:

> ... in her plea for Aquinas there is, it seems to me, a kind of positive passion ... It is my guess that what she adhered to in his thought - Thomistic scholar that she was - was his ontological sense, his intuition of being. Looking back from the vantage point of our present stage in history, I think it fair to say that she was struggling to find ontological roots for what we know today as feminist philosophy of Be-ing. In the better parts of Aquinas's work she found hints of what a philosophy of be-ing/be-coming could begin to say. But, of course, as prepackaged in his categories, this ontological sense could *not* be radically liberating.[116]

Further clues are given later, in Outercourse, where Daly meditates upon her former adherence to Thomism as this is expressed in the two doctorates. Here Daly expresses her regret at having to 'make compromises' in her study of Maritain's concept of the intuition of being. For Daly the intuition of being 'was a subject of intense interest'.[117] Indeed she writes that she 'cherished this intuition, and could see no use in philosophizing without it, perhaps even in living without it'.[118] She writes that she was aware at the time of writing the thesis of a perceived split between intuition which was associated with women and which was deemed inferior to 'reason' as this was pre-eminently exercised by men. She contends that she wanted both 'intuition*and* arduous reasoning that is rooted in intuition'.[119] But she could not give her acquiescence to a 'soft' intuitionism. She continues:

> I wrestled with Maritain wherever I thought he was in danger of slipping into a kind of 'soft' intuitionism. Although I agreed with him that 'it is this intuition that effects, causes the metaphysical habitus,' I worried that his line of thinking could fall into an easy assumption that 'this quasi-mystical intuition could play the role of substitute for the*work* of philosophy.

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116 The Church and the Second Sex pp. 23-24.
117 Outercourse p.74.
118 Ibid.
119 Ibid.

> The point is that although I cherished this intuition, and could see no sense in philosophizing without it, even in living without it, I wanted a clear defence of intellectual rigor/vigor.[120]

It was Maritain's lack of philosophical rigour that Daly claimed brought him into conflict with the 'authentic Thomism' to which he professed fidelity. As she notes, for Aquinas 'the existence of God is discovered at the end of metaphysical enquiry. At the beginning of metaphysics one does not presuppose the existence of the first cause'.[121] Yet Daly argues that Maritain precisely upholds the intuition of being as a kind of 'pre-philosophical' knowledge of God, a knowledge that is then 'developed' and 'unfolded' through argument and demonstration. Daly views this as a 'reduction' of 'metaphysical inquiry into the existence of God to a confirmation of certain knowledge which is had on a pre-philosophical plane'.[122] She continues: 'it is highly questionable that the truth of the analogy of being is grasped in an adequate way before long and strenuous philosophical enquiry. It appears, then, that Maritain has not adequately emphasized the exigencies of the genetic order of knowledge'.[123] The compromise that Daly refers to may well have to do with this strict Thomist criticism of an essentially mystical concept that was clearly of great personal relevance to her.

In Outercourse Daly rereads The Problem of Speculative Theology in a similar way. She writes:

> In my analysis of Thomistic texts, I had found passages suggesting that theological knowledge has a 'dynamism to go beyond itself,' a 'tendency to over-reach itself,' that is, to attain understanding that is beyond reason, but in an inherently rational way. I was arguing that theology overreaches blind faith in its seeking for understanding, that it 'tends to a certain participation in the vision of God.' To put it simply, I was fighting for intellectual autonomy.[124]

In the context of speculative theology this ' certain participation in the vision of God' is the fruit of arduous metaphysical reasoning. Indeed one of the main criticisms of Maritain was that he veered off the traditional metaphysical route.

Yet Daly falls into the same kind of 'intuitionism' for which she suspects Maritain. Daly might perhaps respond that since she now no longer operates from within a Thomist framework she is no longer compelled to follow its rules. This is of course true. Yet it begs the question as to what kind of sense her retrieval makes. For in wrenching the concept of the intuition of being from its

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120 Ibid.
121 Natural Knowledge of God in the Philosophy of Jacques Maritain p.44.
122 Ibid., p.46. The genetic order of knowledge proceeds from logic, mathematics, natural science, moral science and finally metaphysics. Ibid., p.38.
123 Ibid., 46.
124 Outercourse p.69.

metaphysical framework she deprives it of the context in which it finds its meaning. When the Thomist metaphysical framework is removed we appear to be left with a rather vague 'mysticism of being'. It seems to be the case, then, that the fundamental intuition or 'sense' of Being that is central to Daly' s feminist writings is something that Daly has conceptualised partly with, and partly against, both Aquinas and Maritain.

Daly's criticism of the metaphysics of immutable being and her emphasis upon the intrinsic dynamism of ultimate reality bears many affinities with the metaphysics of Process philosophy. The bone of contention between the kind of 'classical ' metaphysics represented by Aquinas and the so-called 'neo-classical' metaphysics represented by a figure like Alfred North Whitehead concerns the issue of how 'transcendence' relates to 'process' or 'dynamism'. In classical theism the ideas of transcendence and process have been generally regarded as contradictory. As we have seen Daly criticises Aquinas' dependence upon the Parmenidean equation of true being with immutability and puts forward a type of *preclassical* notion of process as the ultimate category for understanding reality. The convergences between her own work and Process philosophy centre upon the primacy of the category of creativity,[125] the metaphysical unity of being and becoming, the importance of the concept of teleology and the idea that everything in the universe is intrinsically related to everything else. In Daly's later writings, in which she seems to propound the doctrine that all life forms enjoy a psychic aspect (panpsychism) there appears to be an acceptance of something like a Whiteheadian 'Subjectivist Principle' whereby every real entity possesses a degree of interiority or 'feeling'. Such 'feeling' only becomes 'consciousness' in the most complex organisms.

Yet for all the structural similarities between Daly's thought and Process philosophy Daly never adopts standard Process metaphysics. Though she makes supportive reference to the contributions made by Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne to the idea of a developing God,[126] she never explores process ideas such as 'bipolar theism', for example, or the possibility of passivity in God. This is partly due to the fact that she is primarily interested in listening to women's experience rather than working from a pre-defined framework.[127] It may also be, of course, that Daly finds the terminology of process thought, despite it's attempts to promote a dynamic understanding of reality, unable to 'capture' that reality. And it may be for this reason that Daly makes the decision to switch

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125 Pure Lust p.3.

126 See for instance Outercourse p.157.

127 C.f.: Daly 'The courage to leave: a response to John Cobb's theology' in David Ray Griffin and Thomas J. J. Altizer, op. cit.

to a different mode of philosophising: one which seeks to evoke Be-ing through metaphor and symbol rather than to describe and render it in strict metaphysical categories.[128]

We can say that as well as providing the intellectual womb in which her early theology was formed, Thomism is one of the hermeneutical keys to her later work such that failure to grasp the significance of the intellectual bounty bequeathed by Thomism, can only result in an inadequate interpretation of her work in part or as a whole. Daly's writings do not, however, simply reflect the influence of Thomism in a passive sense . The metaphysical concepts of being, causality, the Platonic forms and the notion of ontological participation may well be the tools by means of which the skeletal structure of her thought is enabled to be organised and constructed. However, the meaning of elements within the classical technical vocabulary she draws from is stamped indelibly by the way in which she applies them to the situation of women. No major contemporary feminist theologian apart from Daly has seriously entertained a critical dialogue with Thomism.

The ontology that underpins her feminist writings has been greatly influenced by Thomism in spite of the fact that she continues to criticise the 'masculinist' elements within it. Yet even as she criticises the tendency towards stasis that she sees in Aquinas' dependence upon the Parmenidean concept of immutable Being, there remains a sense in which she still cherishes Thomas' fundamental existential intuition. But there is also the sense - paradoxical perhaps - in which Daly thinks that the domestication of Being/static worldview which Aquinas' metaphysical categories encourages in some ways runs counter to Aquinas' fundamental sense for the dynamism of Be-ing. It is this sense for Be-ing that Daly later explores from the vantage point of feminist theory. The line of argument that I wish to pursue here is rather difficult to articulate, obscure. It has to do with a mystical or quasi-mystical 'feel' for Being that I believe Daly experiences and which she thinks is incapable of being fully 'displayed or rendered in and through any existing or possible conceptual system. Indeed it may be one reason why the ontological structure of her thought is never fully explicitly or stated in 'conventional' philosophical language. There is a sense - not fully expressible given the strangeness of the form of Daly's work in terms of conventional metaphysics - in which her thinking remains rooted in that 'sense' of/for being (no other word seems applicable) that Aquinas articulated through his strict causal categories but which is ultimately perhaps a mystical phenomenon. There are intimations in Daly's later work that suggest that the causal

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[128] Other feminists theorists are not so reticent about the prospects of Process thought for feminism. In the United States particularly, the interdisciplinary dialogue between feminism and process thought continues to prove fertile ground for a mutual affirmation of shared values. One of the earliest explorations of the convergences and divergences between the feminists and Process thinkers was a symposium chaired by Sheila Greeve Davaney at in 1975, subsequently published under the title Feminism and Process Thought : The Harvard Divinity School/Claremont Center for Process Studies Symposium Papers. Symposium Series, no.6. (New York and Toronto: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1981).

categories in and through which she had learned to think theologically began to frustrate her philosophically. What I wish to argue here is that whilst Daly became disillusioned with Aquinas' speculative metaphysics she yet sensed in parts of Aquinas' thought - perhaps most of all in the concept of *esse* - a certain intrinsic dynamism that, if freed from the encasement of Aquinas' causal categories, was capable of transforming women's perceptions of themselves, their oppression and the potentiality for subjective expansion.

It is interesting to discover that Aquinas himself may himself have come to a similar conclusion about the limitations of his metaphysical approach.[129] The American philosopher John D. Caputo in his book Heidegger and Aquinas: An Essay on Overcoming Metaphysics takes the mystical vision Aquinas enjoyed towards the end of his life (6 December, 1273) and employs it as the hermeneutic key to his system. After the experience Aquinas is reported to have said: 'Everything which I have written seems like straw to me compared to what I have seen and what has been revealed to me'. Caputo uses this utterance as a principle with which to reread Aquinas' metaphysics, arguing that Aquinas' thought is trapped within the metaphysical encasement inherited from the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition. Caputo shows that Aquinas does not mediate the simple essence of 'presencing' (as Heidegger attempted to do) but instead maps out the metaphysical dynamics of a thoroughly causal conception of reality. He conceives of Being in terms of maker and made, creator and created. He writes: 'St. Thomas does not practice a quiet, meditative savouring of the presencing of Being; he has instead reduced presencing to realitas, causalitas, actualitas'.[130] But he argues that 'there is more to St. Thomas than metaphysics, and that this metaphysics tends by a dynamism of its own in the direction of a non-metaphysical experience of Being. And in this sense there is an overcoming of metaphysics in St. Thomas as well'.[131]

It may be the case that one of the reasons for Daly's abandonment of the Thomist metaphysical grid proper was that she came to recognise it as incapable of rendering Be-ing. The thrust of Aquinas' metaphysics is, as I have already remarked, intellectualist. That is to say, it is primarily towards an explication of the boundaries and potentialities for our *knowledge* of Being that Aquinas' whole system is oriented. Our salvation and our intellectual perfection are synonymous for him. Daly too was guided by Aquinas' intellectualism in her Thomist doctoral work. Only a few years afterwards, however, her emphasis shifted. Instead of following the speculative metaphysical path mapped out by Aquinas Daly engaged in a form of phenomenological description of women's experience. The rendering of Be-ing does not take place within an

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129 Caputo, John D. Heidegger and Aquinas: An Essay on Overcoming Metaphysics (N.Y.: Fordham University Press, 1982).
130 Ibid., p.248.

intellectual system but in the practical life in its multiple dimensions - in our know-ing, act-ing, lov-ing and creat-ing.

131 Ibid.

Chapter four: Sociology

In this chapter my attention turns to focus upon Daly's interaction with sociological theory in the form of Peter L. Berger's work. Berger's sociological interests traverse a number of intellectual areas. He has published widely on topics such as modernity and social policy,[1] as well as on religion and theology,[2] but it is Berger's work in the sociology of knowledge, specifically his theory of social construction or 'worldbuilding', that has been taken up and used by Daly in her feminist writings.[3] The research that I have undertaken is an attempt to address the lack of scholarly recognition of the importance of Bergerian concepts in the evolution of Daly's feminist theory.[4] Daly's concern with the creation of socio-cultural meaning and knowledge antedates her creative encounter with Bergerian theory. It is evident, in nascent form, in The Church and the Second Sex, in which she criticises the meaning-content of certain theological symbols (e.g. God the Father) and their (mis)use in bolstering the oppression of women. The impact of Berger's work was essentially (and, as Daly later remarks 'unwittingly') to provide her with a sophisticated social analysis through which she could further explore the question of male domination. In Outercourse she acknowledges that the article 'After the Death of God the Father'[5] (1971) - in which she explored the authority

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[1] Berger. Peter L. with Brigitte Berger and Hansfried Kellner The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974); Peter L. Berger Facing up to Modernity: Excursions in Society, Politics, and Religion (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1977).

[2] Berger, Peter L. The Precarious Vision: a Sociologist Looks at Social Fictions and Christian Faith (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961); and The Heretical Imperative: Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1979).

[3] A definition of sociology of knowledge from the perspective of Peter Berger is given in Berger with Thomas Luckmann The Social Construction of Reality - A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972; first published in the U.S.A. in 1966) p.15. For an explanation of how Berger's understanding of the sociology of knowledge relates to previous formulations of the discipline and to related conceptions in nineteenth and twentieth century intellectual history see ibid., pp.15-30; and James E. Curtis and John W Petras (eds.) The Sociology of Knowledge: A Reader (London: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1970), pp.7-45.

[4] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza classifies Daly's work under the rubric of the sociology of knowledge, but makes no attempt to isolate Berger's influence. See In Memory of Her: a Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins (London: SCM Press, 1983), pp.21-23.

[5] Daly 'After the Death of God the Father: Women's Liberation and the Transformation of Christian Consciousness' Commonweal (12 March, 1971), pp.7-11; also published in Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow (eds.) Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), pp.53-62.

structures that secure women in their role as perennial social outsiders - was 'in part inspired by *The Sacred Canopy*'[6] (1967), the book in which Berger sought to describe the social processes through which human 'worlds' are constructed and maintained. Daly describes 'After the Death of God the Father' as a 'Breakthrough to a New way of thinking'.[7] In the paper Daly employs Bergerian sociological concepts such as 'plausibility', 'legitimation' and 'externalization'. In response to a letter from Daly Berger voiced his disagreement and displeasure at her feminist application of his theory in her article 'After the Death of God the Father'.[8] At the time Daly was surprised by Berger's attack though later she came to view the encounter as an early and important experience of 'Dis-illusionment'. Through her correspondence with Berger, she writes, 'I gained the insight, never to be forgotten, that one could write a lucid book such as *The Sacred Canopy* ... while refusing to acknowledge its logical implications. ... patriarchal theorists could know exactly what their society was doing to women while at the same time refusing to know this'.[9] After sending a curt reply to Berger's letter Daly had no further contact with the sociologist. The episode did not, however, signal the end of the discursive relationship between Daly's work and Berger's texts. For, whilst she claims that she found Berger's sociological matrix 'abstract' and 'split off' from the realities that informed her own and other women's lives,[10] she clearly regarded it as useful and, as a result, she continues to 'spring off' from his analysis in her feminist theorising: 'playing' with his sociological concepts in Beyond God the Father and using what she was to call her 'reversal of his reversal' to great creative effect in Gyn/Ecology and Pure Lust, in which whole patterns of cultural meanings (e.g. sado-masochism) and the meaning of individual linguistic signs (not just religious symbols) become important areas for feminist political engagement.

Yet Berger's theory is rarely addressed directly by Daly in her writings, and when she does refer to his work her comments are given in passing, and her treatment is characteristically polemic. In a brief allusion to Berger's theory of social construction in Beyond God the Father, for example, she portrays the eminent sociologist as an 'unwitting' accomplice in her acts of theoretical and methodological insurrection.[11] The depiction of Berger as an ignorant ally in her radical feminist political project is a familiar rhetorical ploy, the function of which is implicitly to assert Daly's

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6 Berger, Peter L. The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion (Garden City, N.Y.: 1967). This book was published in the Great Britain under the title The Social Reality of Religion (London: Faber and Faber, 1969). It is to the latter work that I shall refer hereafter.

7 Outercourse p.134.

8 Ibid., p.135.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Beyond God the Father pp.135-36.

theoretical superiority (*she* - and not Berger - holds the hermeneutical key to understanding the processes of social construction), and to cleave her audience closer to her by enrolling us in her piratical intellectual ventures (for *we* - the readers - take pleasure in being let in on the 'secret' that the male stream theorist is too myopic to perceive).

The chapter has two objectives. The first objective is to demonstrate that Daly's understanding of the nature of sexual oppression in terms of women's marginalisation in the social processes of knowledge generation - and the social power of reality definition that it brings - has been influenced by Berger's sociology of knowledge. Berger's writings are not, of course, 'feminist': his work does not arise out of an active concern to understand, and struggle to overcome, the situation in which women occupy a subordinate social position relative to men. Nevertheless, through a process of critical interaction with Berger's work - in which Daly interrogates the 'patriarchal' presuppositions that underpin his inquiry - she gains both a sociological vocabulary and a framework for comprehending the processes by which patriarchal social knowledge is produced and maintained as subjectively 'real'. In short, by 'playing' with Berger's theory she is able to formulate her own alternative, feminist sociology of knowledge. The aim of Berger's sociology of knowledge is to formulate what he terms a social 'critique of consciousness'. This critique entails the study of both 'objective reality' (that is, 'knowledge' about the world, as this is 'objectivated' and taken for granted in society) and its 'subjective correlates' (that is, the ways in which this knowledge is made credible or 'real' to the individual).[12] It is from within this framework, given systematic delineation in The Social Construction of Reality, that Berger goes on to theorise the function of religion, in The Sacred Canopy, in terms of 'legitimation'. From her reading of this book Daly grasped that in order to understand sexual oppression the feminist theorist must learn to discern the rules and criteria that inform the generation and codification of social 'knowledge', for such knowledge structures social reality such that men are enabled to dominate and oppress women in everyday life. This, in turn, means paying serious attention to language for, in Berger's theory, the social knowledge that orders and structures social reality is mediated and built up through linguistic structures.[13] The consequent theoretical emphasis upon knowledge generation and the role of language in mediating social meanings has proven to be one of the hallmarks of Daly's radical feminist approach.[14]

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[12] For a useful summary of Berger's project see his essay 'Identity as a Problem in the Sociology of Knowledge' in Curtis and Petras, op. cit., pp.373-386.

[13] The Social Construction of Reality pp.49-61.

[14] I do not mean to argue that Daly's view of language has been informed solely by reference to Berger's work. Daly has been influenced by the linguistic philosophy of Suzanne Langer. See Suzanne Langer Philosophy in a New Key: A Study of the Symbolism of Reason, Rite and Art (Cambridge: Harvard

The second objective is to discuss Daly's use of Berger's theory in terms of the relation between feminist theory and male-stream theory. That Berger's work is properly classified as a product of male-stream intellectual culture is not, of course, to be taken as self-evident, and part of my aim in what follows is to reconstruct Daly's arguments as to why Berger's work provides a good example of the assumptions and processes of patriarchal theory-making. What, precisely, is the nature of Daly's dealings with Berger's sociology? Daly has described her feminist engagement with Berger's work as: 'sorting out nuggets of partial, i.e., patriarchally distorted, knowledge' and placing them in a 'Metapatriarchal context, so that they could radiate richer meanings'.[15] The rewards of this mining activity, if such they may be construed, have yet to be demonstrated here. Some of the questions that will guide and inform the analysis are as follows. Does Daly merely extend Berger's conceptual framework so that women, as well as men, can become subjects of human 'worldbuilding'? Or does she delve deeper into Berger's sociological methodology, so as to question the very structure of the theory from a feminist perspective? And, if Daly is doing the latter, of what value are Berger's theoretical constructs to feminism?

The material is organised in the following way. I shall begin, firstly, by putting forward a summary exposition of Berger's theory of social construction or worldbuilding. Beyond God the Father - the book in which Daly engages openly with Berger - contains only the most fleeting description of his theory, running to no more than a few paragraphs. We should not be misled, however, by the casual manner in which she deals with Berger's theory. The importance of Berger's sociology of knowledge to Daly's understanding of oppression is greater than the sporadic and indifferent references might suggest. A more detailed account of the theory is therefore necessary in order to properly contextualise her criticisms.

I shall proceed, secondly, to examine Daly's criticism of the theory. Daly's strategy is to expose several flaws in Berger's *method* of 'objectivity' (which, as we shall see, have repercussions for Daly's feminist utilisation of the *content* of the theory). Daly's main criticism is that Berger's approach is 'gender-blind' and that, in glossing over the different roles played by the sexes in the linguistic processes and institutions through which social knowledge is generated and formalised, Berger's theory is already inadequate as a description of *human* 'worldbuilding'. But her feminist criticism of Berger goes beyond the mere identification of gaps in the theory of worldbuilding to threaten the structural integrity of the theory itself. For, as she sees it, the process of male externalisation (a process that includes masculinist sociology) has been *predicated* upon the

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University Press, 1976; first published in 1946). See also Dale Spender 'Defining Reality: A Powerful Tool' in Cheris Kramarae, Muriel Schulz and William M. O'Barr (eds.) Language and Power (London: Sage Publications, 1984) pp.194-205.

exclusion of women as subjects of worldbuilding activity. Thus Daly's criticism exposes the existence of a 'masculinist' perspective in Berger's theory.

In spite of these criticisms, Daly continues to 'play' with his concepts and ideas in her later books. My third task will be to explore her subsequent proposals for a feminist reconstruction of knowledge. As part of this project I shall show how she returns to Berger's theory in order to spell out some of the ways in which the flaws in Berger's 'masculinist' or 'male-stream' methodology impact negatively upon the content of his theory. I shall focus upon two elements in Berger's theory of worldbuilding that have since become major preoccupations for Daly in her feminist writings. I refer to the respective roles played by language and religion both in maintaining sexual oppression and in creating opportunities for liberation.

Before I begin a few words are in order regarding the primary source material that I have drawn upon in my reconstruction of Berger's position. Daly makes reference to only two of Berger's writings: The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion and A Rumor of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural.[16] However, in fleshing out Berger's position I have drawn upon three other works: a meditation on sociological methodology entitled An Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective,[17] and two further works that set out, in comprehensive and systematic form, the perspective within the field of the sociology of knowledge that Berger operates from, namely, The Social Construction of Reality - A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge co-authored with Thomas Luckmann, and the essay 'Identity as a Problem in the Sociology of Knowledge'.[18] These works were originally published before The Sacred Canopy. They help to ground an understanding of Berger's ideas in the latter by placing them within a wider sociological context.

Without further delay I enter upon my first task, viz., to give a brief description of the main points in Berger's account of 'worldbuilding'. Central to Berger's sociology of knowledge is the assumption that 'man' seeks perennially to infuse meaning and order into 'his' world.[19] Berger calls

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15 Outercourse p.157. 'Metapatriarchal' is Daly's word for that which is, as it were, 'beyond' and 'outside' the system of patriarchal domination. See Wickedary p. 82.

16 Berger, Peter L. A Rumor of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971).

17 Berger, Peter L. An Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective (St. Ives: Penguin, 1991; first published by Doubleday in 1963)

18 In Curtis and Petras, op. cit., pp.373-386

19 This emphasis upon the human individual and the subjective meaning humans attach to their individual actions and their interaction with others reveals Berger's fundamentally Weberian orientation in understanding both sociological method and the nature of modern society. For Berger consciousness is always intentional, that is, always directed toward something. That humans do in fact attach meaning to their actions implies of course that individual agents are not mechanically determined but are in some sense

the collective tendency to reach out beyond the self in order to create a meaningful social world *'externalization* '. Externalisation is: The ongoing outpouring of human being in the world, both in the physical and the mental activity of men';[20] a process that goes to the very heart of what it is to be human.[21] Like both Hegel and Marx, Berger views externalisation as an anthropological necessity that derives from the biological and environmental constants that govern man's life. Man has no 'species-specific environment', he can exist fruitfully in a range of geographic and climatic situations. His drives are not so clearly directed or so specialised as the drives that direct other species; the instinctual apparatus possessed by him, for example, is not as well developed as that of our fellow mammals and other animals. When we are born, then, we are, in a manner of speaking, 'unfinished'.[22] 'Man', Berger writes, is 'biologically denied the ordering mechanisms with which other animals are endowed' and is therefore 'compelled to impose his own order upon experience'.[23] In order to survive we must *build* a stable environment in which to live and thrive because it is not provided as for other animals by biological imperatives.[24] It is not our instinctual drives so much as our interrelation with the surrounding human and natural environment that delimits and determines the formation of socio-cultural structures. Externalisation is, then, fundamentally about the infusion of meanings into the world.

But externalisation is only one 'moment' in a threefold 'dialectic'[25] by which the social world is constructed by human beings, and through which it comes to possess coherence and intelligibility.[26] The two other 'moments' of the dialectic are called by Berger 'objectivation' and

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at least 'rational' and 'free'. Such a presupposition is not of course derivable from positivistic science and Berger counsels that human activity must be therefore be 'understood', in the Weberian sense of *verstehen*, that is they must be *interpreted* as being meaningful.

20 The Social Reality of Religion p.4.

21 The Social Construction of Reality p. 4

22 A similar position is occupied, from an anthropological perspective, by Clifford Geertz in 'Religion as a Cultural System' in Reader in Comparative Religion second edition, revised William Lessa and Evon Vogt (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1963), p.209.

23 The Social Reality of Religion p. 19.

24 Paolo Freire makes a similar point and uses the idea as an anthropological base for 'problem-posing education'. See Pedagogy of the Oppressed translated from the Portuguese by Myra Bergman Ramos (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972) p.57.

25 'Dialectic' in Berger's vocabulary means simply 'interplay and is not to be confused with other uses of the term, notably by Hegel. In Berger's usage the social construction of the world is dialectic in the sense that, once constructed, it is able to act back upon its producers.

26 The Social Reality of Religion p.81. I have mentioned the primary influence of Weberian sociology in Berger's emphasis on culture as a subjectively meaningful phenomenon. But the dialectic of externalisation, objectivation and internalisation also shows Berger's attempt to integrate this approach with the other principle approach to sociology, namely, the Durkheimian tradition which stresses culture as an objective fact.

'internalization'.[27] In the second moment of the dialectic the meanings that are externalised by man immediately become objectified in the various artefacts of culture. These artefacts include, amongst other things, our belief systems, our moral codes and our social institutions. The process by which this occurs is called *'objectivation'*. Basically what happens is that the world brought into being as a result of the externalisation process comes to attain a quality of 'objective facticity', it is 'there' and 'thing-like'. As Berger explains: 'The world of social objectivations, produced by externalizing consciousness, confronts consciousness as an external facticity. It is apprehended as such'.[28] It is thus that the externalised world, 'including that part of it we call social structure, attains for them [human beings] the status of objective reality'.[29] Finally, in the third 'moment' of the dialectic these objectified meanings are subjected to *'internalisation'*. This is a process by which objectified meanings are reabsorbed into consciousness 'in such a way that the structures of this world come to determine the subjective structures of consciousness itself'. Internalisation occurs through the agency of *'socialisation'*. This is constituted by 'the processes by which a new generation is taught to live in accordance with the institutional programs of the society',[30] an important part of which is the individual's identification with the said institutional agendas such that the world becomes *my* world. Meanings that are internalised form subjectively plausible views or definitions of reality, ethically mandated norms of personal and collective conduct, rules and principles of social discourse and general guides to everyday living. In Berger's terms: 'society now functions as the formative agency for individual consciousness'.[31] The 'world' that is thus brought into existence through the dialectic is characterised above all by meaning and order: it is intelligible, it makes sense. Berger defines the ensuing world as a *nomos* or 'meaningful ordering of experience'.[32]

Behind the impetus to engage in 'worldbuilding' lies a 'craving for meaning' that is the result of inescapable anthropological realities. Meaning is expressed through objectivations, which function as 'enduring indices of the subjective processes of their producers'.[33] That is to say, an important function of objectivations is to indicate what is going on in the mind of the person or

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27 Berger notes that the terms 'externalization' (*Entaüsserung*) and 'objectivation' (*Versachlichung*) derive originally from Hegel and were applied to collective social reality by Marx. Berger's employment of 'internalisation' derives its use in American social psychology, particularly the work of George Herbert Mead - see for example Mind, Self and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934).

28 The Social Reality of Religion p.15.

29 Ibid., p. 81.

30 The Social Reality of Religion p.15.

31 Ibid.

32 *Nomos* is simply Berger's play on Durkheim's concept of*anomie*. See Suicide (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1951) pp.241ff. *Nomos* is, of course, the other pole to *anomie*.

persons who made it. One of the most 'crucially important' forms of objectivation is 'signification' or 'the human production of signs'.[34] A variety of 'sign systems' exist in culture: collections of material objects, gestures and patterned bodily movements (such as dance) etc. But by far the most important sign system is 'language', defined by Berger as 'a system of vocal signs'. As he points out it is by means of language that the ordinary objectivations of everyday life are maintained: 'Everyday life is, above all, life with and by means of the language I share with my fellowmen. An understanding of language is thus essential for any understanding of the reality of everyday life'.[35] For Berger language is the primary medium for the social externalisation, objectivation and internalisation of 'human' meanings. It is the means by which the 'cognitive and normative edifice that passes for "knowledge" in a society' is built up. Berger does not question the *content* of the various levels of social knowledge, he is merely concerned to describe the processes by which information comes to attain the status of knowledge in society. The phenomenon of language is the paradigmatic nomos, 'the great world-building instrumentality of man'.[36] Systems of language are, in one sense, the product of the perpetual quest for meaningful order. All empirical languages 'may be said to constitute a nomos in the making or, with equal validity, as the historical consequence of the nominizing activity of generations of men'.[37] It is thus through language that we order our world and make it meaningful; it is through language that we enter human society.

Berger's way of dealing with language is important to note. For it is obviously quite different to, say, the treatment of language given by a structural linguist who, instead of emphasising language as a vehicle of meaning (as Berger does), focuses upon language as an objective and impersonal phenomenon constituted by various rules, patterns and structures. In fact, Berger's treatment of language coheres well with his emphasis on culture as a set of meanings that are being constantly created, recreated and shared intersubjectively and which are then objectivated in material artefacts.

The above account of Berger's theory of social construction is a condensed and highly generalised summary of a complex framework. Nevertheless, it is sufficient for the purpose of reconstructing and discussing Daly's criticism of the theory. Daly's first major engagement with Berger's work occurs in Beyond God the Father. There are few overt references to Berger in her later writings, in spite of the fact that the analysis of 'patriarchal' reality, in Gyn/Ecology and Pure

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[33] The Social Construction of Reality p.49.

[34] Ibid., p.50.

[35] Ibid., pp.51-52.

[36] The Social Reality of Religion p. 175.

[37] Ibid., p. 20.

Lust, is shot through with the themes of socialisation, plausibility structures, social deviance, and legitimation.

In Beyond God the Father Daly's method is to 'test' Berger's theory of social reality from the perspective of women. Such an approach implicitly brings women to visibility as potential subjects of a sociology of knowledge. This in turn problematises the validity of assertions and assumptions in Berger's theory that are taken as self-evident. She begins by arguing that the theory of 'worldbuilding' breaks down in the face of sexual domination. For Berger, 'worldbuilding' is a social capacity that is exercised by all human beings, regardless of social location. Daly argues, however, that women have not been actively participant in this process. Women's capacity to be the agents of world-shaping action is hindered and stunted by a dominative socio-cultural system. Women are not encouraged to explore and put forward their own experiential perspective on the world. Even if they manage to do this, their meanings have not been received as socially valid by the dominant power élite. The officially validated cultural products (objectivations) of what Berger calls the 'human' process of externalisation are all, without exception, the products of *male* social activity. Indeed the very symbolic forms and conceptual apparatuses (still taken for granted by most women in Western culture) through which the flux of 'human' experience has been typified and ordered have been created and configured by socially privileged men.[38] Daly writes: 'It is not only the case that women have been excluded or marginalised in the bastions of public politics, they have also been foreigners ... to those citadels in which thought processes have been spun out, creating a net of meaning to capture reality'.[39] In this scenario 'reality' is a product of male social activity, and the 'world' - as both women and men experience it - is a place where male experience is normative. Indeed, rather perversely, male experience is equated with human experience. Women's experiences, when they differ from men's experience, are not seen as either valid or socially useful. It has been *male* meanings, and male meanings only, that have been accepted and internalised as the culturally ascendant matrix of meaning for *both* sexes. She continues: '... it is women who are conditioned to be the internalizers *par excellence*, a point which the noted sociologist passes over'.[40] Through the socialisation process women have been encouraged to internalise the identity and the roles that men have created and sanctioned for them. This identity is 'false' in as much as it is imposed upon women, as it were, from outside.

Berger's theory itself emerges from a totalising 'patriarchal' frame of reference. Inspite of his intrinsic commitment, as a sociologist of knowledge, to multiple dimensions of reality, Berger's

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38 Beyond God the Father p. 7.

39 Ibid., pp.6-7.

40 Ibid., p.136.

description of the processes of social reality generation is, in radical feminist terms, 'monodimensional' in as much as it remains ignorant of the power dynamics that affect the social processes of 'worldbuilding'. Daly uses several terms such as 'phallocentric' and 'patriarchal' to connote the male symbolic order under which women live, an order in which only male-centred meanings enjoy legitimacy. The phallocentric symbolic is, in Daly's words, 'totalising' and 'monodimensional'. According to its own logic patriarchy *is* culture, the phallocentric ordering of experience *constitutes* meaning itself. Indeed, the major cultural vehicles of meaning in culture have been so structured as to preclude the possibility of women being able to ask fundamental critical questions about the way their 'worlds' are ordered. As Daly writes, women have 'screened out experience and responded only to the questions considered meaningful and licit within the boundaries of prevailing thought structures, which reflect sexist social structures'.[41] Under prevailing social conditions, then, patriarchal meanings exclude the possibility of women existing as fully autonomous beings. Women are included in the prevailing symbolic, of course, though it is 'woman through the eyes of man'.

Daly criticises Berger for collapsing together the historically different roles played by the sexes in the worldbuilding process. Under patriarchal social conditions, she writes: 'it is indeed *men* who do the externalizing, in which case Berger is correct'.[42] Berger does not grasp that his own sociological writing is conditioned by a 'male-stream' perspective. The theory - which purports to have universal relevance - actually derives from a partial and limited perspective. The fact that Berger does not *see* this is interpreted by Daly as symptomatic of the theoretical bias that is reflected in his use of the conventional but pseudo-generic noun 'man', and its equally pseudo-generic pronoun 'he', to describe the 'human' subject of worldbuilding, in The Sacred Canopy. Major political implications are consequent upon this critical deficiency. For in not addressing the question of how the dynamics of sexual power have affected the processes through which reality is actually constructed Berger implicitly allies himself with the sexual status quo. His theory is thus woefully incomplete, according to Daly's feminist standards, because his method ('objectivity') and his focus ('man') never extend beyond the parameters of the patriarchal paradigm.

On the basis of this insight Daly is enabled further to theorise the social processes by which knowledge is generated and socially validated. A central argument is that women's exclusion from the worldbuilding process has occurred as a direct result of male dominance over linguistic processes and the power of social definition that they bring. She concurs with Berger's idea that it is principally through the medium of language that the human social world is constructed and

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41 Ibid., p.7.

42 Ibid., pp.135-6.

maintained. As she writes: 'To exist humanly is to name the self, world, and God'.[43] The fundamental difference between Daly and Berger centres not upon the nature of language, a point upon which they appear to agree, as upon who *controls* the development and codification of language and thus thought and knowledge. The exercise of language by human beings is seen as relatively unproblematic in Berger's work. It is a sex-neutral tool to which all human beings, regardless of their social location, are thought to have access. Even the constraints that attend language-use are described in similarly universal terms. Thus the statement that: 'When human beings invent a language they then discover that both what is able to be said and thought are determined by its grammar'[44] glosses over the question as to who enjoys the power to 'invent' and control the development of language and thought itself in culture. In place of Berger's universalist view of the instrumentality of language Daly puts forward an alternative theory based upon the feminist assumption that there exists a power disequation between men and women in every human society and that a major indicator of this situation is the different relation each sex has to language. Whilst both sexes enjoy the innate capacity to externalise meaning, to 'name' the world from their different perspectives, women's meanings have not been adopted, classified and indexed in the 'public' world of the grammarian and the lexicographer. In Dalyian terms women have had the power of 'naming' stolen from them - an occurrence that has had catastrophic effects for female social power, autonomy and freedom. Women have 'been entombed in imposed silence, in the gross and obvious way of simply being excluded and in the more subtle way of only being allowed to echo male words'.[45] It is because women are disadvantaged as speakers and writers, and not because of some supposed innate inferiority, that women have played no socially significant part in shaping the 'human' understanding of reality.

In Beyond God the Father Daly lays the foundations for a conspiratorial theory in which the *nomos* of language itself has been 'taken prisoner' by men. Women, she writes, 'have had the power of naming stolen from us. We have not been free to use our own power to name ourselves, the world, or God'.[46] The theme of male conspiracy is taken further in her later writings, reaching its zenith in the Wickedary. Here words themselves are said to be 'confined', the 'prisoners' of patriarchy.[47] Words lie shackled in 'cages and prisons of patriarchal patterns ... beaten down,

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43 Beyond God the Father p. 8.

44 Ibid., p.19.

45 Ibid., p.151.

46 Ibid., p.8.

47 The Wickedary p.20.

banalized, reduced to serving the sentences of father time'.[48] The point that I think Daly is striving to make is that the creative, liberatory potentiality of language is stunted when one group assumes collective responsibility for naming from a 'human' perspective. Males have somehow 'usurped' the cultural-linguistic power bestowed by the control of language as a group and have used it to impose their own 'naming' of the world upon women. She leaves open the question of how such a state of affairs came about, though she is in sympathy with the argument that matriarchal or matrifocal cultures existed at some point in ancient history. Indeed: 'Wickedarians believe that one reason we can Dis-cover Webs of Wild Words in the ordinary dictionaries of patriarchy is that these were Archaically woven by Wild Women - by our own kind'.[49] This statement would seem to suggest that women were the primary bearers of the power of language-making. The hypothesis is wholly speculative, however, and Daly does not pursue it.

The 'conspiratorial theory' suggested by Daly's rhetoric should not be taken literally. Daly is aware of the fact that not all males have enjoyed the privileges bestowed by the power of naming. To this extent the theme of conspiracy, predicated upon what in Dalyian phraseology might be called 'Malevolent Male Machinations', is inadequate fullyto explain the phenomenon under discussion. The serious point that much of the conspiratorial rhetoric tends to cloud is that it is not, as with women, on account of their *sex* that such men have been excluded from active participation in the processes of social definition. Rather is their exclusion due to other factors (such as race and class oppression) which, in Daly's theory, are in some sense derived from sex domination which is seen as historically the primary and most basic form of oppression.[50]

The identification of Berger's analysis as a productof *male* rather than 'human' externalising activity allows Daly to recast his ideas, in effect reversing his 'reversal'. Retaining Bergerian vocabulary Daly exhorts women to 'uproot' the prevailing, male constructed, sense of reality by expelling 'what has been internalised'[51] and moving 'toward externalizing our own being in objective social reality'.[52] The only way in which women can dis-possess themselves of what Daly calls the 'soul shrinking' internalisations of sex-role conditioning and pour their own meanings forth into the world is, of course, to reclaim access to language and thence the power to define reality. Daly argues that the liberation of the naming process, indeed the liberation of language itself, must take place as a necessary condition for the establishment of a *different* ordering of reality in which women will

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48 Ibid., p.3.

49 Ibid., p.4

50 Beyond God the Father p.46.

51 Ibid., p.136.

52 Ibid., p.137.

not be marginal but central figures. Women must have access to'externalization' for two principle reasons. First, because it is their 'human' prerogative. In this Daly implicitly accepts at least one idea from Berger, namely, that human beings have a major role to play in the construction of what counts as social 'reality'. Secondly, because the male-stream cultural order is morally bankrupt. In Beyond God the Father and Gyn/Ecology it is principally women (though she also mentions other disadvantaged groups) who suffer from patterns of thought such as 'rapism'. In Pure Lust Daly identifies 'patriarchal' patterns of meaning, such as the 'Sado-Ritual Syndrome', which are destructive not only of women and other social 'outsiders, but ultimately of the earth itself and all 'Her' creatures.[53]

As part of the effort to break the 'spell' cast by patriarchal males over the process of knowledge construction (or naming) Daly formulates a methodology for bringing about an autonomous female reconstruction of knowledge. The method is described by Daly in terms of the metaphor of the 'Labrys' (the double-sided axe wielded by the legendary Amazon women). The strategy of castration-creation then is viewed as a critical 'weapon' which 'Warrior Women' may wield as part of the 'war' against their oppressors.[54] This method has two critical edges: the castration/exorcism of male meanings and the creation/ecstasy of new 'gynocentric' meanings.[55]

Castration/exorcism represents the negative pole, the impetus towards the demystification of the phallic world view and its underlying value-system. In general terms the method of castration/exorcism' expresses the need for an ongoing process of demystification, the continual critique of the 'ill logic' and methods of patriarchal thought. In sociological terms this translates as an analysis of the ways in which the specificities of context relate to the production of social 'knowledge'. Hence her unremitting concentration on the processes of knowledge construction. When dealing with cultural texts - whether these be fairy tales or social anthropological accounts of female genital circumcision - she recommends women to ask themselves: just 'whose' knowledge is being depicted, either implicitly or explicitly, as 'reality'? Ultimately a critical space is opened up between their own perception and experience and what is commonly accepted as 'social reality'.[56] In addressing (and encouraging other women to address) these questions Daly perforates the superficial layer of 'objectivity' and 'value-freedom' or 'neutrality' that pervades much scholarship, exposing the political interests lurking covertly beneath.

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53 See this thesis p.31.

54 Daly Gyn/Ecology p.405.

55 Daly gets the idea of exorcism of 'the "demons" which are born of the projection-introjection mechanisms from Harvey Cox C.f.: The Church and the Second Sex p.169f.

56 This transformation is described in phenomenological terms by Sandra Bartky in 'Towards a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness' Social Theory and Practice 3 (Fall, 1975), pp. 425-39.

Thus the first step 'back' and 'forward' to reality for Daly consists in becoming conscious of the origins and of the obstacles of our knowing and thinking. She asks us to meditate upon the operation of our mental processes, upon how we (unthinkingly) think about the world in order to identify destructive patterns. Specifically Daly urges women to pare 'away from the self all that is alien and confining...we should struggle to detect whatever obstacles we can find, both internal and external, to this dis-covering of the Self.[57] Women must 'exorcise' the 'false' identities imposed upon them in patriarchy. Such a commitment entails hard cerebral work. As she comments: 'The Amazon Voyager can be anti-academic ... Only at her greatest peril can she be anti-intellectual'.[58] Breaking out of socially sanctioned patterns of meaning may of course be difficult because it requires that we challenge the patterns of thinking that we have been coerced into adopting. Nevertheless the very fact that the human world is socially constructed is a source for hope. For what we have been socialised into learning can be unlearned. Moreover many have already 'seen through the Lie'. That women are able to deconstruct the 'logic' of phallocratic reality implies prior knowledge of 'another reality', a reality perhaps only partially glimpsed, but there nonetheless. Daly maintains that once a woman begins, with other women, to analyse her context critical she becomes increasingly conscious of the origins and of the obstacles of her own knowing and thinking processes. A woman is able to step back and to look at her social reality with new eyes, to consider the way in which her own mental processes operate, to ponder the ways in which she views the world. As a result of this critical activity women are able to isolate patterns of thinking/acting that are destructive of ourselves and others.

Daly practices the method of castration in and through her writings. In Gyn/Ecology and Pure Lust, for example, she probes the language and 'logic' that pervade fairy tales and other children's literature (including school books, magazines etc.). She argues that such material conveys a particular and, from the female point of view, an insidious pattern of meanings. The messages that are relayed to women via these conduits include the idea that male domination is 'natural', and sanctioned by the highest orders of 'reality'; that women somehow 'derive' from males and thus owe them their allegiance; that women are weak and prone to the influence of wayward and demonic forces; and that men have the power and the authority to 'save' women from themselves. This semantic matrix is there, an already objectified reality before the infant enters the picture. As female children are socialised they thus become inducted into phallocracy, drawn into 'accepting' constraint by 'alien' male systems and patterns of meaning ('alien' because they have either distorted or elided women's experience) and disconnected from alternative ways of conceiving and ordering the world

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57 Gyn/Ecology p.381

58 Pure Lust p.xiii.

on the basis of their own autonomous experience. Likewise, she analyses 'the all-pervasive language of myth, conveyed overtly and subliminally through religion, "great art", literature, the dogmas of professionalism, the media, grammar'.[59] These media, she argues, convey 'deceptive perceptions' both 'overtly' and through 'subliminal messages intended to incapacitate on deep psychic levels', smothering women's 'Elemental potency,'[60] women's native('Original') power to 're member'/create/transform reality. 'Myth' in this broad sense both communicates the socio-political ethos of patriarchal society - an ethos which is able to maintain itself only by accentuating certain aspects of reality whilst blocking out others. In such a universe of meaning women learn that they are of little value apart from their connections with men and the male order. The promulgation of messages such as these, through myth, is construed as a form of colonisation or 'Possession' by demonic forces.

It is the task of radical feminist 'metaethics', as Daly formulates it in Gyn/Ecology, to locate 'the hidden agendas concealed in the texture of language, buried in mythic reversals which control "logic" most powerfully because unacknowledged'.[61] Such a task inevitably involves 'a deliberate confrontation with language structures of our heritage'.[62] This includes the 'breaking' of patriarchal myths that prevent women from seeing and naming their oppression. Male myths cannot aid women directly in the task of self-realization.[63] Such myths however 'contain stolen mythic power. They are something like distorting lenses through which we can see into the Background'. It is therefore 'necessary to break their codes in order to use them as viewers; that is, we must see their lie in order to see their truth'.[64] Unlike many of the French feminist writers, then, who are sceptical of women's chances of using language (which they think is intrinsically male) in order to liberate themselves from phallocratic discursive structures, Daly believes that women can find reality 'by destroying the false perceptions inflicted upon us by the language and myths' of men.[65]

The second moment of the method of liberation - creation/ecstasy - represents the more positive pole, the movement towards the creation of new meanings, sense and values. Daly claims that women cannot rest content with castrating sexist language but need to 'wrench back some word-

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59 Gyn/Ecology p.3.

60 Pure Lust p.166-194.

61 Gyn/Ecology p.12.

62 Daly, Beyond God the Father p.167. This concept was originally formulated by Paulo Freire in his educational work with the oppressed of South America. Daly duly notes her debt to Freire in footnote 12 on p.200 of Beyond God the Father. For Freire's formulation of naming see Pedagogy of the Oppressed (N.Y.: Herder and Herder, 1970; London: Sheed and Ward, 1972).

63 Beyond God the Father p.44.

64 Ibid., p.47.

power'. As she writes: 'Gynocentric Method requires not only the murder of misogynist methods (intellectual and affective exorcism) but also ecstasy, which I have called ludic cerebration'.[66] As well as a 'castrating' of patriarchal language and symbols then the method of naming involves a 'breakthrough to new semantic fields'.[67] Daly believes in the power of speech, the project of human intercourse. She wants therefore to move beyond the view of language as inexorable 'power over' to a view of speech as part of an emancipatory effort. In one sense, then Daly's feminist 'method' *is* 'nothing less than this beginning to speak humanly - a reclaiming of the right to name' for she believes that the 'liberation of language is rooted in the liberation of ourselves'.[68]

Women's reconstruction of linguistic forms occurs for Daly in feminist community. Thus she writes: the context for women's entry into the symbolic realm 'has its source and its verification in the rising consciousness women have of ourselves and our situation'.[69] As Adrienne Rich notes, in On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-78: 'The crucible of a new language [is] that primary presence of women to ourselves and each other first described in prose by Mary Daly'.[70] This change in the meaning of words comes, for Daly, 'from qualitatively new experience'.[71] The kind of experience that Daly thinks will 'transvaluate' the value system underlying present patriarchal linguistic structures is not simply women's experience generally but, more specifically, 'the women's revolution'. Daly understands the movement for women's liberation in terms of a 'history-bearing group'[72] with a 'vocational consciousness' (though its not, as in Tillich's analysis, centrally organised). However she thinks feminists 'can hardly be described as a group' if by that we mean interest group because their vocation is ultimate: ' the human becoming of that half of the human race that has been excluded from humanity by sexual definition'.[73]

The task of finding a way by which to create or externalise new 'gynocentric' meanings is hazardous and difficult. But Daly refuses to despair and attempts, through her own writing, to 'Spin' and 'Weave' 'Original' or 'Elemental' meanings that resonate with a 'metapatriarchal' reality. That Daly is only partially successful in this project is due to the nature of language itself. The creation

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65 Ibid., p.4.

66 Gyn/Ecology p.23.

67 Beyond God the Father p.8f.

68 Ibid., p.8.

69 Ibid., p.9.

70 Rich, Adrienne On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-78 (N.Y.: Norton, 1979) p. 250.

71 Beyond God the Father p.8.

72 Tillich Systematic Theology Volume III: Life and the Spirit, History and the Kingdom of God (Welwyn: James Nisbet and Co., 1964. First published by the University of Chicago in 1963) pp.329-333.

73 Beyond God the Father p.35

of meaning arises from the production of new ways of articulating the 'objective' codes of language. Language is both already 'given' to individuals as an 'objective facticity' (as Berger says), a structure that predetermines in some way the subjective acts of consciousness;[74] and yet language is also an 'intentionality of subjective consciousness', that is expressive and creative of meaning. The process of 'weaving' or 'spinning' meaning through language is thus an activity in which we are all potentially or actively involved, whilst drawing upon those meanings that are already in the social semantic reservoir. Daly employs the term 'web' as a metaphor to describe the twofold nature of language as both the process (we recall the verb: 'textere' 'to weave') and the product (text, the objective 'fabric' of language). The 'Gyn/ecological' meaning of web is both, she writes: 'a fabric as it is being woven on a loom or as it appears when removed from a loom (a web of lace)'.[75] Language is not therefore simply a fixed system of signs but that activity by which meaning is being continually produced. Whilst absolute novelty is impossible, in linguistic terms, Daly believes that the inventive character of language, particularly metaphoricity, is capable of in some way transcending the limits that govern linguistic structures. New meaning, in other words, *is* possible.

Those weaned upon the 'Puritanism' of traditional theory are liable to be dazed by the display of alliteration and word-play which, if anything, intensifies as Daly's work develops. In Gyn/Ecology, Pure Lust and the Wickedary she experiments with existing language forms, both with the English language and with a stream of myth and imagery deriving from Western culture. Words are either invented or de-constructed and given new meanings in order to celebrate the positive value of women and the forms and the history of our resistance to patriarchal oppression. The linguistic strategies she enlists in her battle to re-unite women and words include neologism (Archimage); 'unmasking' deceptive words by dividing them and employing alternative meanings for prefixes (Stag-nation); asking us to listen to words in different ways (Positively Revolting Hag); and the use of lower and upper cases to stress or to demote words (lesbian, Lesbian).

Daly's 'poetics' are predicated upon the possibility of an ontological connection between words and reality. Using the 'Gyn/Ecological' method she attempts to re-integrate the fragmented connections between women and language, often by discerning an 'older' system of meanings hidden 'behind' the existing ones. These 'archaic' meanings, Daly suggests, are originally 'gynocentric' but they have been appropriated by the agents of patriarchal culture in various ways; for example by reversing, extending or subtracting from their original meanings.

One of the more contentious ways that Daly tries to create new meaning for women is to invent words by drawing from dictionary definitions of words as a reservoir of semantic resources.

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[74] Spender, Dale Man-Made Language (London: Pandora, 2nd edition, 1992), pp.141-42.

[75] The Wickedary p. xvii-xviii.

Her choice of the dictionary form, in the Wickedary, aims to unmask the selective nature of dictionaries and their ideological character. Her attempt to recast the form of the 'dick-tionary' follows from her conviction that these collations encapsulate the products of a host of cultural activities - including theology - which have been 'codified' as part of the process of maintaining patriarchal social arrangements. The lexicographical device of tracing words back to their 'origins', she contends, is only a smoke-screen that is intended to mask the deep sources from which words really spring. The etymologies listed in dictionaries do not take us back to our deep Origins, though they may 'contain fragments and clues to our stolen heritage'.[76]

Neither 'moment' is separable from the other. As Daly writes: 'The process of exorcism, of peeling off the layers of mindbindings and cosmetics, is movement past the patriarchally imposed sense of reality and identity. This demystification process, a-mazing The Lies, is ecstasy.'[77] In its fullness this method represents an attempt both to offset the multiple dilemmas for feminists of male patriarchal thought forms and also an attempt to create something original. It embodies an ethic of 'double-vision' in so far as it is an attempt to deal with both the present and the future that is being actualised.

This 'double-edged' approach is contiguous with the radical feminist theory and practice of consciousness-raising. Consciousness-raising is a project involving, on one hand, a criticism of the historic and contemporary definitions, roles and representations of women and, on the other, the creation of new representations of female subjectivity with corresponding social images.[78] Something like this double-edged strategy remains necessary to feminism because, as Daly sees, it is not simply a question of either to continue to be susceptible to patriarchal patterns of meaning or escaping from it by creating an alternative system of meanings. As Spender observes, Daly's view is 'That we are both governed by the patriarchal system but able to get outside'.[79] For Daly, then, both factors apply. Moreover feminists are faced with having to continually 're-invent the wheel' in as much as the younger generation of women are faced with the necessity to experience for themselves basic insights which have been in intellectual circulation for years.

Some feminists have voiced their concern about the limitations of Daly's reconstructive project, especially her experimentation with language forms and words. This is not to say that she is immune from criticism. Daly has been criticised for encouraging the idea that linguistic change equals social change. Clearly the generation of new meanings will not automatically lead to the just

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76 Wickedary p. 43.

77 Gyn/Ecology p. 6.

78 Braidotti, Rosi 'The Politics of Ontological Difference' Between Feminism and Psychoanalysis ed. Fran T. Brennan (London: Routledge, 1989) p.90.

society, to a restructuring of social institutions, to redistribution of wealth or even to increased employment opportunities within the present economic system. But equally clearly freedom from material want is not the only condition of human well-being. As Dale Spender points out one could envisage women being economically independent yet without real psychological autonomy: women's minds could still be 'colonised'.[80] The problem with Daly's work is simply that she creates the *impression* that all women need to do to achieve liberation is to engage in 'ludic cerebration' and the 'mindbindings' and 'spiritbindings' that hold them fast will be loosened. Broadly speaking most women will find it difficult to embrace cultural 'deviancy' in the way that Daly seems to envision. Force of material circumstance may prevent women from exercising their 'choice' to defy patriarchal order. It may be that Daly's proposals are so radical that they fall into utopianism from the perspective of those who are most severely handicapped by the patriarchal system. Added to this is the criticism that in her increasing preoccupation with lyricism and neologism Daly has made herself unreadable and obscure. Deborah Cameron, for example, writes: '[M]any women find it élitist and unreadable. Constant wordplay and extensive terminological definitions are not immediately accessible devices, and feminists need to consider very carefully the extent they are politically productive'.[81] There are two points to respond to here: the first point concerns the accessibility of Daly's writing; the second point concerns whether her linguistic project actually works. I shall take each point in turn.

Firstly, the allegations of the élitism of Daly's writing are, I think, unfair. Feminists who embrace the most opaque and inaccessible contemporary philosophical and linguistic theories are often the ones who attempt to stigmatise her for what they see as her unwillingness to alter the form of her discourse or to change the presentational format of her work in order to make it more manageable for (it is suggested) less educationally privileged women. This attitude displays a quite considerable ignorance of the fact that many socially underprivileged women continue to be challenged and aroused by her writings. (To this extent the inclusion in the ... edition of Gyn/Ecology of Bonnie Mann's paper on the practical uses of the book in the context of work with women survivors of domestic violence is a political masterstroke).[82]

Secondly, with regard to the question as to whether Daly's project with language works one would have to say that the measure of her success is contingent upon the particular criteria for 'success' and 'failure' that feminists, either consciously or unconsciously, assume. Daly's project is fundamentally asking women to invest the language with their own 'original' meanings, and to

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79 Spender Man-Made Language p.208

80 Ibid., p.6.

81 Cameron, Deborah Feminism and Linguistic Theory (London: Macmillan, 1985) p.80

repudiate many meanings that are currently accepted as valid. This is an important political task not just for women but for all oppressed groups who have been collectively objectified by derogatory language and stereotypes. But the process of questioning the whole 'world' construction of phallocracy will be experienced by many men and women as personally threatening. Those who advocate rebellion, such as Daly, will often be vilified as part of the backlash against the forces of change.

It has also been said that the meanings of words are not changed or altered by individuals like Daly or even by groups. As Jean Bethke Elstain notes: 'Meanings evolve slowly as changing social practices, relations, and institutions are characterized in new ways. Over time this helps to give rise to an altered reality, for language evolution is central to reality'.[83] Likewise Dale Spender argues that the problem is not so much with individual words but rather with the semantic rules that consign women to a negative position relative to men. She also views the creation of 'new words' with some trepidation because 'while they are also subjected to the existing semantic rule that male is positive and minus male is negative, there is reason to believe that when consigned to negative semantic pace they too will become pejorated and sexist'.[84] In fairness it should be said that it is not simply the meanings of individual words that Daly is quibbling over. Daly realises that words only *mean* to people within the context of their relation to other words in a sign system. Even neologisms only make sense because we can interpret them within an already existing pool of meanings.[85] But what Daly is primarily interested in is the creation of new patterns of meaning that arise out of women's experiences. As I have reported, in Daly's theory a major condition for new meaning is the emergence of a new experiential context. Minimally this may mean that a woman has broken through to the very first stages of feminist consciousness. Once she comes to perceive a discrepancy between her inner subjective experience and the meanings communicated to her through her social roles she is able to 'hear' herself and (if she takes part in consciousness-raising activity) other women. It is out of this hearing that new words emerge.[86] In Beyond God the Father new radical feminist words are understood to be novel not so much in the sense that they are neologisms but rather words 'which, materially speaking, are identical with the old become new in a

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83 Elshtain, Jean Bethke 'Feminist Discourse and its Discontents: Language, Power, and Meaning' in Nannerl O Keohane, Michelle Z. Rosaldo and Barbara C. Gelpi (eds.) Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982) p.140.

84 Spender Man-Made Language pp.29-30.

85 C.f.: Marilyn Frye's assessment of Daly's linguistic project in 'Re-discovering Fire' in Wilful Virgin: Fessays in Feminism 1976-92 (Freedom, CA: The Crosing Press, 1992) p.99.

86 Beyond God the Father p.8.

semantic context that arises from qualitatively new experience'.[87] This emphasis upon listening to our experience is re-affirmed in Gyn/Ecology. Daly writes: 'In the beginning was not the word. In the beginning is the hearing. Spinsters spin deeper into the listening deep. We can spin only what we hear, because we hear, and as well as we hear. We can weave and unweave, knot and unknot, only because we hear, what we hear, and as well as we hear'.[88]

It would be a mistake to reject Daly's project out of hand simply because her own linguistic constructions are perhaps aesthetically unappealing, or inadequate in rendering our experience with full integrity. As the American feminist philosopher Marilyn Frye acknowledges: 'Though they are in some cases awesome, the new pictures Daly builds in Pure Lust do not entirely suit me. They do inspire and encourage me to rejoin the larger project with renewed vigor, and make more pictures of my own'.[89] It is undoubtedly the case that, as Frye remarks: 'The new meaning form, like a new art form, will arise in the different works of many creators, not by the fiat of one'.[90] Daly has made this point herself on a number of occasions. She is urging women (by example) to speak their own words, to name their own experiences, to do their own work. To engage in creative intellectual endeavour (and here one should not identify intellectual with the narrowly academic) is a mammoth responsibility, particularly so when it is realised that there are no models for women to follow. As Daly frames it in Beyond God the Father women are moving into a world without models. This need not be threatening. All it means is that women are continually thrown back upon themselves and forced to engage creatively with their experience.

In summary: Daly's theory of naming allows the feminist theorist to target language as a terrain upon which power can be redefined and redistributed. Attention to her own practice can instil in the feminist thinker a critical awareness of the ways in which language establishes, maintains and reflects an asymmetrical relationship between the sexes. Her texts achieve this by encouraging in the reader the development of a certain critical habitus, a tendency or predisposition to look at and think about language and its use in a politically discerning way.

The kind of critical manoeuvre that Daly performs on Berger's theory is indicative of the castration of the methodology of sociology that, Daly argues, must occur if women are to find their own cultural voices within such disciplines. What then are the implications of her practice for what might be construed as 'Un-sociology'?

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87 Ibid., p.7.

88 Gyn/Ecology p.424.

89 Ibid., p.99.

90 Ibid.

Daly makes no attempt to explore the implications of her criticisms for the theory and practice of academic sociology itself. She does not suggest alternative 'woman-centred' topics for sociological research (such as housework),[91] nor does she make proposals for the transformation or reconstruction of sociology as a 'scientific' discipline. We must look elsewhere, to the professional feminist sociologists for that.[92] There is no systematic attempt, on Daly's part, to reconstruct the sociology of knowledge from a feminist perspective. This attitude is in keeping with her analytic priorities, which are concerned primarily with listening to women's experience and using it to test potential resources within male-stream theory rather than advancing the development of extant disciplinary methodologies, of which she is suspicious. This is not to say that Daly's criticisms of Berger have no substance, however, nor is it to suggest that her appropriation of elements from Berger's sociological theory cannot be critically assessed by feminist sociologists. Indeed, such critical activity on the part of feminist scholars in the field can only aid the task of further clarifying the nature of Daly's challenge to male-stream theory.

On one level Daly may be interpreted as trying to 'include' women where they were formerly missing or excluded from Berger's account, that is, in the externalisation process. In other words, all women have to do is to begin to join with men in the worldbuilding enterprise in order to make it a fully 'human' process. In another respect, however, Daly is doing something quite different such that a full explanation of the nature of Daly's interaction with Berger cannot be given in terms of the project of 'extension'. Such a theoretical approach is inadequate because, as we shall see, she believes that the very process of patriarchal externalisation - a process that includes masculinist sociology - is *predicated* upon the exclusion of women as subjects of worldbuilding activity. For women are the anomie/chaos over and against which men must impose themselves and their meanings. In order to explain this point it is necessary to refer to Daly's interplay with another of Berger's concepts: religion as legitimation.

The idea of religion as legitimation has been an organising concept in Daly's writings since the early seventies.[93] Daly's criticism of Christianity, in Beyond God the Father, is founded upon an understanding of religion in terms of its function in 'linking the unsteady reality of social constructs

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91 See Anne Oakley Sociology of Housework (London: Martin Robertson, 1974).

92 Smith has attempted to explore what the term 'a sociology for women' actually means. She contends that it means not 'a sociology exclusively for women' but rather a sociology that 'addresses society and social relations from the standpoint of women situated *outside* rather than within the relations of ruling'. Such a sociology would offer women 'a way of seeing further into the relations organizing their lives'. See Dorothy E. Smith The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology (Northeastern University Press, 1987), pp.46-47.

93 See Daly 'The Women's Movement: An Exodus Community' in Religious Education LXVII (September-October, 1972), pp327-35; 'A Call for the Castration of Sexist Religion' The Unitarian

(objectivations) to ultimate reality through myth',[94] a statement that recalls Berger's view of religion as a human product, created in order to bolster the 'precarious' reality constructions that are 'objectivated' (Berger's term) in the course of social activity.[95] Whilst Daly's understanding of the legitimising function of religion is *structurally similar* to Berger's account, however, the understanding of social reality that, in Daly's work, confers meaning upon her use of terms such as 'religion', 'alienation' and 'anomie' is different to the understanding of social reality in Berger's theory. In a subversive theoretical manoeuvre Daly asserts that phallocracy itself (including male sociology) is a religious legitimation or 'sacred canopy' that has been erected by men in the face of women who symbolically represent the terror of 'anomie'. I shall commence by giving a brief description of the theory as it is given by Berger in The Social Reality of Religion, after which I shall move on to analyse Daly's radical feminist interaction with the theory.

In Berger's theory of social construction legitimations foster 'alienation', a form of false consciousness. In The Social Reality of Religion Berger makes a distinction between the 'socialized identity' and the 'total self'. False consciousness occurs when the 'dialectic' between the two (a dialectic that mirrors the dialectical relationship between human beings and their products) is denied and individuals come to associate themselves entirely with their social identity and role.[96] Individuals may not always consciously realise that social reality to be a human construction. They exhibit what Berger calls, following Sartre, 'bad faith' when they simply appropriate the social 'choices' of previous generations, thus 'forgetting' their own responsibility to decide. Should 'man' 'forget' that 'the world he lives in has been produced by himself', that in other words both self and world are products of 'his' own activities, both the social order or world and the socialised self 'confront the individual as inexorable facticities analogous to the facticities of nature'. The resulting state of being is what Berger calls alienation.[97]

Universalist Christian (autumn, 1971).

94 Beyond God the Father p.138.

95 Daly's statement mirrors, almost word for word, Berger's characterisation of religion in The Social Reality of Religion p.32.

96 Berger The Social Reality of Religion p.94.

97 Alienation (to which a remedy is possible) should not be confused with estrangement which is 'given in the sociality of man, in other words, ... it is anthropologically necessary'. (Ibid., p. 85). Internalisation involves 'a *duplication of consciousness*, in terms of its socialized and non-socialized components. Duplication of consciousness 'has the consequence of setting aside, congealing or estranging one part of consciousness as against the rest. Put differently, internalization entails self-objectivation. That is, part of the self becomes objectivated, not just to others but to itself, as a set of representations of the social world - a "social self", which is and remains in a state of uneasy accommodation with the non-social self-consciousness upon which it has been imposed'. (Ibid., p. 83). Duplication 'results in an internal confrontation between socialized and non-socialized components of self, reiterating within consciousness itself the *external* confrontation between society and the individual'. (Ibid., 84.) A tension thus emerges

Alienation frequently serves to bolster the individuals defences against 'anomie'. Anomie signifies the experience of the break down or disintegration of the social order by means of which the individual was previously enabled to make sense of her/his existence. Alienation protects the individual against anomie by virtue of its ability to 'immunize' the individual from the uncertainties which characterise human world-building. Psychologically, then, inner strength is the reward of alienation (whilst those who take measures to eschew bad faith and who recognise their own productive roles in the determination of social reality are prone to the psychological instability of anomie). The alienated individual appears to possess resolution in conduct and certainty and confidence with regard to personal identity. In reality, however, the alienated individual is evading social facts.

It is here that legitimations enter the picture. For Berger the rationale for legitimations is to foster alienation as a way by which to cope with, or ward off, the threat of anomie. As 'socially objectivated "knowledge"' legitimations seek to 'explain and justify the social order' by providing a complete raison d'être for society's structures.[98] The social world intends, as far as possible, to be taken for granted. Indeed, a major index of the success of socialisation is the degree to which this taken-for-granted quality is internalised by the individual. To facilitate the achievement of a taken-for-granted status *nomoi* seek to become encompassing orderers of human experience. As Berger frames it every nomos is driven by 'an inherent logic' which strives to 'expand into wider areas of meaning'.[99] Even 'if the ordering activity of society never attains to reality, it may yet be described as totalizing'.[100] Summarising this notion Berger writes: 'It is not enough that the individual look upon the key meanings of the social order as useful, desirable, or right. It is much better (better, that is, in terms of social stability) if he looks upon them as inevitable, as part and parcel of the universal "nature of things"'.[101] For this reason it must be constantly maintained through various legitimations.

A distinction is made, in Berger's theory, between different types of legitimation: 'the level of self-legitimating facticity and that of, so to speak, secondary legitimations made necessary by

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between two sides of individual consciousness. Internalisation means that only one part of the self is objectivated not just to others 'but to itself, as a set of representations of the social world a "social self", which is and remains in a state of uneasy accommodation with the non-social self-consciousness upon which it has been imposed'. (Ibid.). The creation of 'otherness' therefore, both internally within consciousness and externally in society, comes to be the product of social life. At this fundamental level, however, there is little that can be done.

98 Berger The Social Reality of Religion p.29

99 Ibid., p. 20.

100 Ibid.

101 Ibid., p.24.

challenges to facticity'.[102] The former simply refers to the fact that the socially constructed world legitimates itself by virtue of its 'objective facticity'. However, additional legitimations are invariably necessary in any society. This necessity is grounded in the problems of socialisation an social control. For if the nomos of a society is to be generated from one generation to another, so that the new generation will come to "inhabit" the same social world, there will have to be legitimating formulas to answer the questions that, inevitably, will arise in the minds of the new generation'.[103] So what Berger refers to as secondary legitimations operate at different levels: the 'pretheoretical level' (not formal intellectual systems) on which one finds simple formulae expressly affirm, as Berger puts it, the paradigm of 'This is how things are done'; 'an incipiently theoretical level' which consists of explanatory schemes which help to direct activity - proverbs, traditional wisdom etc. - that may be developed further through legends, folklore, myths;[104] 'explicitly theoretical legitimations, by which specific segments of the social order are explained and justified by means of specialized bodies of "knowledge"'; and, finally, 'the highly theoretical constructions by which the nomos of a society is legitimated *in toto* and in which all less-than-total legitimations are theoretically integrated in an all-embracing Weltanschauung'. The final level consists of 'symbolic universes', that is, 'bodies of theoretical tradition that integrate provinces of meaning and encompass the institutional order in a symbolic totality'.[105] Examples of 'symbolic universes' include religion, philosophy and science. It is through this level of legitimation, Berger writes, that 'the nomos of a society attains theoretical self-consciousness'.[106] It seeks both to describe how things are in reality and, on the basis of this, to prescribe how things ought to be. Individuals are liable to internalise the illusion allowing them to believe that 'in acting out the institutional progams that have been imposed upon them, they are but realizing the deepest aspirations of their own being and putting themselves in harmony with the fundamental order of the universe'.[107] Human projections are elevated to the status of cosmic realities. Berger writes, 'institutional programs are endowed with an*ontological status* to the point where to deny them is to deny being itself - the being of the universal order of things and, consequently, one's own being within this order'.[108] Legitimations thus endow the nomos with extraordinary power.

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102 Ibid., p.31

103 Ibid., p.30

104 Ibid., p.31

105 Berger The Social Construction of Reality p.113.

106 Berger The Social Reality of Religion p.31

107 Ibid., p.33.

108 Ibid., p.25.

Historically religion has been the most potent instrument of legitimation because it 'relates the precarious reality constructions of empirical societies with ultimate reality'.[109] That is to say, religion is able to mystify the roots of human social constructions, making them appear to be written into the very fabric of the universe.[110] As Berger himself declares, one can hardly imagine a psychologically more effective method by which to tie the individual to the social nomos. For: 'To go against the order of society is always to risk plunging into anomie. To go against the order of society as religiously legitimated, however, is to make a compact with the primeval forces of darkness'.[111] In its function of hypostasising human social projections religion establishes a sacred cosmos from primeval 'chaos', serving as a 'canopy' or shelter from the dreaded anomie.

Daly lays the foundations for her approach to religion as a form of legitimation in Beyond God the Father. Like Berger, she considers institutional religion in functional terms. However, in her account the social system that religion functions to maintain is not society in the abstract but *male dominated* society. Reading Berger's theory in the light of phallocratic society Daly makes a distinction between the anomic experience of men and that of women. Thus she argues that when the sociologist writes: 'To be in a "right" relationship with the sacred cosmos is to be protected against the nightmare threats of chaos. To fall out of such a "right" relationship is to be abandoned on the edge of the abyss of meaninglessness' he is 'quite unaware that he is describing precisely the spiritual dimension of feminist consciousness'.[112] Daly believes that religion is able to legitimate patriarchal social reality so effectively because it encourages women and men to remain in 'the false security of alienation', a state that she discusses largely in terms of 'self-reduction in sex roles'.[113] Religion mystifies social origins of the roles into which individuals are socialised thus encouraging false consciousness. As she explains: '*People* attempt to overcome the threat of nonbeing by denying the self. The outcome of this is ironic: that which is dreaded triumphs, for we are caught in the self-contradictory bind of shrinking our being to avoid nonbeing ...'.[114] (My emphasis). The tendency to retreat into alienation is then characteristic of both sexes.

Daly acknowledges that all human beings are threatened by anomie. But she considers that historically the social psychology of men as a collectivity has been different to that of women. Daly speculates that a primary shaping force in the social psychology of male externalisation is the

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109 Ibid., p.32.

110 Ibid.

111 Ibid., p.39.

112 Beyond God the Father p.141.

113 Ibid., p.23.

114 Ibid.

outpouring of male self-hatred and its projection onto women. She interprets the Christian myth of the Fall in terms of this social psychological pathology. The narrative of the Fall, she writes, 'has provided legitimation not only for the direction of the self-hatred of the male outward against women, but also for the direction of self-hatred on the part of women.[115] Because the story forms part of a sacred canon of texts both women and men are encouraged to internalise the message of female evil transmitted via the mythic figure of Eve. In this way patriarchal religion intensifies 'the process through which women internalise the consciousness of the oppressor. The males' judgement having been metamorphosed into God's judgement, it becomes the religious duty of women to accept the burden of guilt, seeing the self with male chauvinist eyes'.[116] Women in their position *vis-à-vis* male society thus come to be symbolic of the negativity and anomic chaos that threatens to engulf men.

In Gyn/Ecology Daly develops this idea by conceptualising patriarchy itself as a kind of universal 'religion'. Not only Christianity and institutionalised religion but all of the 'symbolic universes' created by men together represent a 'sacred canopy' which has been constructed for the benefit, not of human beings generically, but for socially powerful males in the face of an experience of anomie (meaninglessness and chaos) that is in some way connected with 'woman'. She writes:

> Patriarchy is itself the prevailing religion of the entire planet, and its essential message is necrophilia. All of the so-called religions legitimating patriarchy are mere sects subsumed under its vast umbrella/canopy. They are essentially similar, despite the variations. All - from buddhism and hinduism to islam, judaism, christianity, to secular derivatives such as freudianism, jungianism, marxism, and maoism - are infrastructures of the edifice of patriarchy.[117]

All of these ideological frameworks, she maintains, 'are erected as parts of the male's shelter against anomie. And the symbolic message of all the sects of this religion which is patriarchy is this: Women are the dreaded anomie'.[118] The phallocentric nomos that provides the meaningful ordering of experience in patriarchal society is designed to protect men from experiencing the 'meaninglessness' and chaos that lies in wait beyond the hinterland of the male symbolic. Daly analyses a variety of patriarchal legitimations under the rubric of 'sadospirituality'. This phenomenon involves not only religious and other ideologies but a whole cultural ethos and its

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115 Ibid., p.48.

116 Ibid., p.49.

117 Gyn/Ecology p.39

118 Ibid.

thought patterns, including the cultural stock of myth and symbol. Again the fundamental message is reinforced by 'ritual'. (In Berger's theory religious ritual acts so as to perpetually 'remind individuals of the connections between social and cosmic reality by making present 'the fundamental reality-definitions and their appropriate legitimations').[119] In Gyn/Ecology she analyses a set of cultural rituals such as footbinding, cliterodectomy or widow-burning (*sati*) that symptomatise the patriarchal struggle to keep women inside the androcentric symbolic by drawing them into complicity with their fundamental message.[120] In a move that signals a radical departure from Berger's theory, however, Daly exhorts women to surrender the comforts of alienation by smashing the 'sacred canopy' that, according to Berger's logic, protects them from the 'terror' of 'anomie'. In doing so she emphasises another aspect of Berger's idea of religion: its capacity to facilitate de-alienation.

That religion is a double-edged has long been recognised by sociologists. The Durkheimian tradition in sociology has shown that religion is a product of social forces and can function to reinforce prevailing social structures.[121] Yet, as Weber's work shows, religion may also affect empirical reality in a liberating way.[122] In The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism Weber demonstrated that religion can act not so as to reconcile the individual with her alienation but to rise up and transform that state. Acknowledging both research traditions Berger grants that 'religion appears in history as both a world-maintaining and a world-shaking force'.[123] He writes:

> [It] would be gravely misleading to regard the religious formations as being simply mechanical effects of the activity that produced them, that is, as inert 'reflections' of their societal base. On the contrary, the religious formations have the capacity to act upon and modify that base. This fact, however, has a curious consequence - namely, the possibility of de-alienation itself being religiously legitimated.[124]

In the history of religions the situation of a religion actually fostering de-alienation is quite rare. For the most part religion has ontologised human social reality. Emancipatory opportunities do arise periodically however. Berger links the propensity of a religion to legitimate de-alienation to its ability to conceive of human constructions *sub specie aeternitatis*. The capacity to view society and its mechanisms under the aspect of eternity relativises them, allowing them to be perceived for what

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119 Berger The Social Reality of Religion p.40.

120 Ibid., p. 109.

121 Durkheim, Emile Elementary Forms of the Religious Life translated by J.W. Swain (N.Y.: Collier Books, 1961; London: Allen and Unwin, 1915).

122 Weber, Max The Sociology of Religion (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968) pp80-137.

123 The Social Reality of Religion p.100.

they are, that is, the products of human activities.[125] In terms of religious doctrine those religious traditions which stress the radical transcendence of God are more likely to facilitate the process of de-alienation than those which emphasise God's immanence.

Daly appropriates this idea that religion may, under certain conditions, facilitate de-alienation and transposes it into her alternative feminist theoretical account. In Beyond God the Father she considers that whilst the idea of church 'has certain propensities for serving as an escape from facing the abyss',[126] the notion of some kind of 'space set apart' can be useful to feminists if, and only if, such a space is found 'not in the effort to hide from the abyss but in the effort to face it, as patriarchy's prefabricated set of meanings, or nomos, crumbles in one's mind'.[127] On this understanding the sacred space that is discovered 'in the deep confrontation between being and nonbeing' is 'not "set apart" from reality, but from the contrived nonreality of alienation'.[128] The space that Daly is talking about here is, of course, feminism itself which she conceives in terms of dynamic ontological movement. Women's marginality presents them with an opportunity to challenge the prevailing symbolic order. Exposure to the experience of nothingness gives women 'a sense of distance and relativity in relation to the symbols prevailing in one's culture. Without it, the mind tends to perceive these as literally "true" or at least as permanently adequate for all cultural situations, which means that the human mind becomes paralyzed by its own products'.[129] When a woman challenges the social role and identity that have hitherto given her life meaning she is able to see that these structures are relative, human products and therefore not absolute and ultimate, her consciousness is driven 'beyond fixation upon "things as they are"'.[130] In some ways then what Daly sees as the dynamics of feminist move-ment (the movement from alienation, through confrontation with nothing to an awareness of participation in be-ing) reveals 'clues' and 'signals of transcendence' which may in turn function to ground a new feminist approach to theology.

The phrase 'signals of transcendence' derives from Berger's work A Rumour of Angels in which he explores the constructive possibilities for theology in the light of secularity . Berger notes that in the modern world traditional religious beliefs have been emptied of meaning not only in large sections of the general population but even among many churchgoers. Those to whom the

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124 Ibid., p. 96.

125 Ibid., p. 99.

126 Beyond God the Father p. 156.

127 Ibid.

128 Ibid.

129 Ibid., p. 28.

130 Ibid., p. 24

supernatural is still meaningful constitute a 'cognitive minority', that is 'a group of people whose view of the world differs significantly from the one generally taken for granted in their society... a group formed around a body of deviant "knowledge"'.[131] Berger's thesis in the book is that in spite of the current 'Geist' of secularity the supernatural[132] survives 'in hidden nooks and crannies of the culture'.[133] He suggests that a profitable avenue for theologians would be to seek out such signals 'within the empirically given human situation'. He goes on to suggest that 'there are prototypical human gestures that may constitute such signals.[134] These gestures are 'phenomena that are to be found within the domain of our "natural" reality but that appear to point beyond that reality'.[135] The examples given by Berger include the human propensity towards order, play, hope and , humour and the phenomenon of damnation.

In Daly's work the existence of 'God' is postulated upon the basis of the experience of transcendence that, she believes, lies at the heart of feminism. Women's 'realization of our exclusion from the world-building process', represents a kind of 'via negativa' (here shesprings off the analysis of Huston Smith) which whilst it does not '"prove" Transcendence ... makes room for it'.[136] It does this by allowing us to discover 'our previously unknown being, which points our consciousness outward and inward toward as yet unknown Being, that some would call the hidden God'.[137] She writes: '...women who are confronting the nothingness that emerges when one turns one's back upon the pseudo-reality offered by patriarchy are by that very act saying "I am", that is, confronting our own depth of being'.[138] The 'sense of transcendence' arising from such experiences, she contends, 'can be seen as rooted in the power of being, which, perhaps for lack of a better word, some would still call "God"'.[139] She acknowledges that the Elemental forces are 'always Unknown' in themselves.[140] Yet she believes that it is not unreasonable to infer the existence of such a deep

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131 Ibid.

132 Berger defines belief in the 'supernatural' as 'the assertion of belief that there is an other reality, and one of ultimate significance for man, within which transcends the reality which our everyday experience unfolds'. A Rumor of Angels p.14.

133 Ibid., p.39.

134 Ibid., p.70.

135 Ibid.

136 Beyond God the Father p.38.

137 Ibid., p.38.

138 Ibid., p.36.

139 Ibid., p.28.

140 Ibid., 'Original Reintroduction' p.xxvii.

reality from the phenomenological data, and she is personally convinced that women ultimately 'live, move and have their being' in transcendent Be-ing.

For Daly then patriarchal religion (which comes to symbolise phallocracy itself) has offered women 'the delusory paradise of false consciousness and alienation'[141] in sex roles. Yet, a 'new meeting with the sacred' is possible through the 'confrontation with nonbeing' and the 'intuition of being' that is inherent in feminist consciousness. Feminism thus offers women an ecclesial 'space'. This space 'may be "dangerous" in that it means living without the securities offered by the patriarchal system for docility to its rules'.[142] But 'it offers a deeper security that can absorb the risks that such living demands. This safety is participation in being, as opposed to inauthenticity, alienation, nonidentity - in a word, nonbeing'.[143] It may also be perceived to be threatening to those who 'are fixated upon patriarchal space', threatening the meanings bestowed by rigid role definitions.[144] But it is in reality 'an invitation' to those thus threatened to confront nothingness also. It is ultimately a loving act.

Any attempt by women to move out of the role of the primordial cultural scapegoat is deeply threatening to men who require women to function as the repository of their projected negativity. For if women refused to continue to function as the Other men would be compelled to face their own 'nothingness', a situation that they seek to avoid. In personifying the collective refusal of the role of scapegoat, Daly argues, the women's movement 'represents this terror of chaos and says it will no longer be kept at bay'.[145] She surmises that patriarchal males will summon and utilise 'all the tools of violence at their command' in order to suppress any attempt by women to question the prevailing order.[146] The 'tools of violence' that Daly refers to range from indoctrination through socialisation, myths and advertising to physical violence, sexual torture (rape) and ultimately, for some women, murder. As we have seen, in the phallocratic scenario these phenomena function in the manner of 'rituals' that seek to remind women of the original sacred 'myth' or story. Reminders are constantly necessary, Daly writes, because 'the social reality that they attempt to link with "Ultimate Reality" is precarious, and the danger of anomie or of "conversion" is a threat that lurks always behind the irrational dogmatism of the High Priests of war. The need for ritual "reminders" itself betrays the precariousness of the shields against anomie which these High Priests, both

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141 Ibid., p. 67.

142 Ibid., p. 41.

143 Ibid.

144 Ibid.

145 Ibid., p.142.

146 Ibid., p.143.

ecclesiastical and civil, wish to keep erect'.[147] Unlike Berger, then, who appears to consider some level of alienation necessary for society to operate,[148] Daly wants to see individuals emerge fully from the illusion that social roles and identities are fixed for them.

This process of emergence is articulated through the rhetoric of both creation and discovery. Daly's emphasis upon the latter is particularly interesting, for it highlights a central difference between her work and Berger's theory. Implicit in Daly's rereading of Berger's theory of religion as legitimation is the notion that the male psyche exhibits a desire to control and manipulate 'reality', which is inherently threatening to him. In Berger's theory the social actor is represented as an active 'maker of choices', an individual with an intrinsic and unquestioned potency to initiate and effect change. Fundamentally, however, this idea of the social actor arises from the need for the individual to conquer and control 'reality'. As I have described, the desire for control is rooted, in Berger's theory, in an in-built anthropological need for security in the face of 'anomie'. For Berger society does not present itself as an auto-stabilising entity.[149] It is inevitably 'precarious': there is always the possibility that it may, under certain conditions, collapse and come crashing down around our ears. Such conditions are given in *marginal situations* . These 'appear on the horizon of consciousness as haunting suspicions that the world may have another aspect other than its "normal" one, that is, that the previously accepted definitions of reality may be fragile or even fraudulent. Such suspicions extend to the identity of both self and others, positing the possibility of shattering metamorphoses'.[150] It is the experience or state of being threatened by such situations that Berger calls anomie. The most vivid instance of marginality is death. For Berger death generates all our efforts to create secure structures and imbues them with anxiety.

Berger's view of the social-psychological importance of personal death and our fear of it's impending reality is derived from the work of Alfred Schutz.[151] In Schutz's social psychology death functions as the 'fundamental anxiety' from which 'spring many the many interrelated systems of hopes and fears, of wants and satisfactions, of chances and risks which incite man within the natural attitude to attempt the mastery of the world, to overcome obstacles, to draft projects, and to realize

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147 Beyond God the Father p.143.

148 Berger The Social Reality of Religion p.89.

149 Whilst Berger's account of society holds affinities with functionalism (the guiding principle of which is that aspects and elements of social life should understood in terms of their contribution to the stability of society considered as a whole) this tendency may be qualified somewhat.

150 Berger The Social Reality of Religion p.23.

151 Berger The Social Construction of Reality p.119, p. 226, n.74. Heidegger is another important influence on this point.

them'.[152] As the feminist sociologist Dorothy Smith shows Schutz's attitude to death is contestable from several perspectives, including feminism. Smith points out that Schutz's assumption 'is grounded in a mode of action in which the power to act and coordinate in a planned and rational manner and to exercise control as an individual over conditions and means is taken for granted'.[153]

In reproducing Schutz's presuppositions about the 'fundamental anxiety' in his own analysis of marginal situations Berger is open to criticism. Berger's ideas about death and the threat of anomie that it poses are in fact highly speculative and it could be argued that they reveal more about Berger's presuppositions and worldview than about the situation of humankind. As Peter Lassman observes Berger's postulation of death in terms of a Schutzian 'fundamental anxiety' and anomie as it's inevitable accompaniment are 'unexamined postulates' that 'seem to have the status of "social-existentialist" universals'.[154] Berger's work has, of course, been greatly influenced by existentialism in general and Sartrean existentialism in particular.[155] The imperative for individuals to build a world follows, for Berger, from the existentialist assumption that authentic human life is one which seeks to create a 'world' out of pre-existent chaos. (To renege on this responsibility to choose and to take refuge in the dictates of social institutions, inherited meanings and roles is precisely to fall into 'bad faith'). Yet are these true 'universals'? Berger's view of death is in fact highly privatistic. Death is given meaning in and through socio-cultural contexts; it is not necessarily as terrifying as Berger maintains and could be seen simply as part of the cycle of life.

The general impression that one gets from Daly's writings is not that human beings are continually threatened by original forces of chaos. There is no sense of the 'absurdity' or fundamental meaninglessness of life *in itself* as there is in many of the existentialist writers.[156] She has, by contrast, a strong sense of the purposefulness or finality of human existence. At a number of points in her writings she speaks of the 'Journey' into reality both as something that humans 'create and something that we 'discover'.[157] The direction of travel is both 'backwards' and 'forwards'.[158]

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152 'On multiple realities' in Collected Papers (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962) 1:228. Cited in Dorothy E. Smith The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology (Northeastern University Press, 1987), p.66.

153 Smith, op.cit., p.64.

154 Lassmann, Peter 'Phenomenological Perspectives in Sociology' in John Rex (ed.) Approaches to Sociology: An Introduction to Major Trends in British Sociology (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974) p.131.

155 Berger The Social Construction of Reality pp.203f.

156 One thinks of Camus's essay The Myth of Sisyphus (1942) in which the 'hero' is condemned by the gods for eternity to roll a rock up a mountain - when he gets to the top of the mountain the rock rolls down the other side and he must go down and start endlessly again. For Camus of course hope and meaning are possible even whilst one accepts life as 'absurd'.

157 Gyn/Ecology p.1, 350, 400, 414 .

Daly conceptualises the journey to an "original" state of be-ing before the "fall" of patriarchy. This original state that does not, however, reside in the historical past, but rather in the 'intuitive wanderings of a mytho-historical past' (Raymond) which has the potentiality for generating for all women a future vision of becoming, beyond a gender-defined society. Certainly death does not hold the same psychological fascination for Daly that it holds for Berger and the Schutzian tradition of social psychology upon which he draws. Like professional feminists sociologists such as Smith, Daly intimates that far from being universally applicable states of being the preoccupation with fear of death and cognate liminal states may in fact be the reflection of a certain masculinist subjectivity.

Berger's sociology is rooted in the assumption that the 'individual' automatically has the *power* to create and to name the world, an assumption that is at least questionable from the vantage point of women. Women's work and the ways in which their daily lives are organised do not wholly reflect this voluntaristic model. Women have not had the chance to exert 'control' over 'reality'. But Daly goes a step further than Smith when she argues that the attempt to 'master' reality is always doomed to failure. For Berger social reality is always precarious by virtue of the fact that it is not given but is actively constructed and perpetually maintained by human beings. Berger is himself a practising Christian who views the world as grounded in transcendent Being. In his sociological work, however, Berger is solely concerned with the 'world' or 'reality' as it is socially constructed. In other words he is concerned with a 'world' whose 'ontological status' is bracketed.[159] Daly is not hemmed in by any such methodological constraints. In her account it is imperative that human beings place their trust in what she calls the 'deep structure of reality', a structure that originates from Be-ing itself. In Daly's eyes we have no power ultimately over the real, whatever power we do possess comes from our participation in be-ing. Clearly Daly does thinks that the construction of our 'world' is our human ontological vocation and an ongoing responsibility. When she writes that: 'To exist humanly is to name the self, the world, and God' Daly is basically affirming the same idea as Berger, that is, that as human beings we are called upon - in the sense of having an ontological vocation - to externalise our meanings into the world. But the underlying concept of humanity in evidence here is one in which human beings - though enjoying free will - are created with an

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158 Ibid., p.400

159 See Berger The Social Reality of Religion (London: Faber and Faber, 1969) n.1, p.189. A key presupposition of Berger's theory is 'methodological atheism'. Berger writes: 'The essential perspective of the sociological theory here proposed is that religion is to be understood as a human projection, grounded in specific infrastructures of human history'. This is not to be misconstrued as 'atheism tout court' (Ibid., p.180), for as he goes on to explain: 'Only after the theologian has confronted the historical relativity of religion can he genuinely ask where in this history it may, perhaps, be possible to speak of discoveries - discoveries, that is, that transcend the relative character of their infrastructures. And only after he has really grasped what it means to say that religion is a human product or projection can he begin to search, within this array of projections, for what may turn out to be signals of transcendence'. (Ibid., pp.187-88).

inherent 'telos' towards an other order of being, the 'Super natural', that is both continuous and yet distinct from the natural. For Daly social reality must in some sense cohere or 'correspond' with what she calls the structure of 'deep' reality, the fundamental ontological order that grounds all existents. Culture then grows out of nature. This view is reinforced by the dual emphasis, in her writings, upon both the language of social construction and the language of *discovery* . Meaning is something that we both create *and* discover in the course of our social activity. Berger's sociology of knowledge is itself a product and reflection of the process of male externalisation, a process that does not simply neglect women as subjects of externalising activity, but which is predicated upon the exclusion of women as worldbuilding subjects.

In conclusion, then, Berger's work provides Daly with the conceptuality by which to explore the idea that 'knowledge' functions as a form of power that serves to keep women in their subordinate social position relative to men. On the one hand, Daly clearly considers Berger's account of human social construction to be an accurate account of the inherent human social need to create models of reality in the course of our engagement with the world. To this extent, his description of the social processes by which reality comes to be established is unproblematic. Yet, on the other hand, Daly takes issue with Berger over his claim that his report is an 'objective' one. For he glosses over the fact that the social processes of worldbuilding are dominated by males - a fact that has had catastrophic consequences for women. In one sense, then, Daly thinks that Berger is right: worldbuilding is a fundamental human activity engaged in by both sexes. In another sense, however, his work is misleading for the evidence suggests that throughout recorded history the process has not in fact been inclusive of both sexes. Instead, one sex has come to exert a hegemony over the worldbuilding enterprise. Daly's exposure of Berger's failure to take into account the category of sex in his description of worldbuilding need not in itself signify that the fundamental categories of the theory require modification. But Daly's criticism of Berger and her analysis of the phallocentric culture that it reflects shows that the theory of worldbuilding as it stands, is not able to incorporate women on their own terms because the structure of the theory is itself predicated upon the valorisation of male experience upon the exclusion of women and their experience. This in turn leads Daly to formulate a twin-pronged approach of castration-creation that encourage and enable autonomous female knowledge acquisition as part of the feminist political struggle. Such an approach, she believes, renders a more accurate account than is given by Berger of the processes through which social reality is constructed and maintained. That it is able to do so is due to the fact that it begins not from some allegedly 'neutral' Archimedean point, but from the standpoint of those who are effectively disenfranchised by Berger's theory.

Daly's reading of Berger is, of course, highly contestable in Berger's sociological terms.Her espousal of a self-consciously feminist standpoint signals a fundamental methodological shift away

from the kind of 'scientific' approach exemplified by Berger. His method aims at'objectivity', though not the objectivity of the positivist who seeks to report raw facts, but rather an objectivity which whilst recognising that values do influence research seeks to control them through a process of 'bracketing'. In contrast to Berger, Daly's method is shaped by her prior and overt commitment to women's liberation. Daly is concerned, as is Berger, with what 'is', but she is also concerned, as Berger is not, with what 'ought' to be. In as much as Daly's account of social reality is an unfolding of what is already 'known' in her presuppositions it cannot be falsified empirically. Such an account, in Berger's terms, amounts to ideology.

It must be recognised that Daly's treatment of Berger's theory lacks the systematic focus, technical precision and agility with sociological conceptuality of scholars who are steeped in knowledge of the 'canonical' works of the field. Her approach to Berger's writings is thus not on a par, nor is profitably compared, with other more formal critiques of sociological theory such as are to be found in the work of professional feminist sociologists such as Dorothy E. Smith[160] and R.A. Sydie.[161] Yet it may be that the failure to take the category of sex/gender into account in describing the processes by which the social world has been constructed has implications for sociological methodology. Daly attempts to expose Berger's value-neutrality as fraudulent and politically reactionary. She argues that masculinist assumptions are built into the very structure of Berger's theoretical description of social processes and these have the effect of masking the nature of the phenomena under investigation. For as Berger's objective methodology makes clear there is no room for women's experience in the present structure of sociological thinking. In challenging Berger's sex-blind view of worldbuilding Daly reveals women's silencing not only in culture but also in the sociological writing and the social relations that mediate it. Her criticism of Berger thus issues a challenge to the authority of the male sociological voice. The theory - itself the product of male externalisation - represents discourse that conceals the social-psychological factors that condition its own production. It is an exemplification of what Daly later calls 'writing that erases itself'.[162] This raises the problem of an intellectual world which avows universality, but is in fact built around men. Daly's criticism of Berger shows how the rules for knowledge construction in sociological theory itself have been predicated upon the valorisation of male experience to the exclusion of women and their experience.

In challenging Berger's theory Daly is challenging the traditions that have historically set down the rules of discourse between men. As recent feminist research on the history of sociological

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160 Smith, op. cit.

161 Sydie , R.A. Natural Women, Cultured Men: A Feminist Perspective on Sociological Theory (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987).

theory shows, the work of the most prominent sociologists is shot through with patriarchal assumptions. Daly's treatment of Berger's work issues a direct challenge to existing social theory. In her appropriation of Berger's thought Daly turns his theoretical constructs back upon the tradition of masculinist sociology from which they originate. In doing this, I hold, Daly makes a not insignificant contribution to the feminist project to unmask 'masculinist' dominance over Western theoretical perspectives and to give women access to knowledge and the power that this represents.

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[162] Gyn/Ecology p.125.

Chapter Five: Christianity

In this chapter I turn to explore the continuing impact of Christian theology as an influence upon Mary Daly's feminist thought. The history of Daly's theological positioning relative to Christianity is well known in feminist theological circles. As we have seen Daly was a member of the Roman Catholic Church until 1971 when she left the Church in the well publicised feminist 'exodus' out of Harvard Memorial Church. Since moving to a 'revolutionary' feminist theological position she appears to have rejected the sources and methods of Christian theology. Her anti-Christian rhetoric, her evocation of the Goddess and her ostensibly esoteric preoccupation with a 'Metapatriarchal Otherworld' have only fuelled this impression.

In mapping out a position vis-à-vis Christianity Daly has helped, with others, to establish the critical division between 'revolutionary' and 'reformist' approaches (originally categorised by Carol P. Christ).[1] The 'revolutionary' space is occupied by those who, like Daly, now consider many of the concepts, structures and symbols of historic and contemporary Christianity to be 'inherently' sexist and hence irreformable. Such women have, as a result, taken the decision to leave established religious frameworks behind in search of alternative and competing theological discourses which do not serve to marginalise women. Counterpoised to the revolutionaries, in this typological scheme, are the reformists, who believe that by first demystifying masculinist theological forms and then re-constructing female and/or feminist perspectives (on religious texts for instance), the current hermeneutical and institutional frameworks of Christianity (and other religious traditions) can be substantially re-formed or even trans-formed. Christ's typology has been widely acknowledged and employed in feminist theology.

In the following narrative I shall observe the structural convention between 'reformist' and 'revolutionary' feminist theological positions. However, I wish to dispute the adequacy of the accepted reading of the history of Daly's theological positioning. In particular, I wish to maintain that the reformist-revolutionary classification is critically deficient insofar as it underestimates the abiding importance of the Christian tradition to Daly's 'gynocentric' feminist theological thought both in its critical and its constructive dimensions. On the basis of an analysis of the nature of the criticism of Christianity and her reconstructive theological proposals I shall argue that the relation between Daly's thought and the Christian theological tradition is more profitably viewed in terms of

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[1] Christ, Carol P. 'The New Feminist Theology: A Review of the Literature' Religious Studies Review volume 3, no.4 (October, 1977), pp.203-212.

a *dialectic*. In other words, I shall try to show that her feminist theological thinking manifests a 'synthesis' of negation and affirmation of elements in the tradition of Christian thought.

On one level this fact may seem unremarkable. Like other theologians Daly cannot function in a theological vacuum. It is predictable that she would continue to draw in some way from the traditions through which she first came to think theologically. Yet, on another level, the recognition of a dialectical relationship with Christianity may have implications that transcend the particularity of her work to encompass the aforementioned current division of labour between 'reformist' and 'revolutionary' feminist theologians. For it may mean, not only that the 'revolutionary' path is not as radical as it may at first appear, but also that there are grounds for a serious and constructive theological dialogue between Daly (and those 'revolutionaries' who have been influenced by her work) and reformist (Christian) women.

The chapter is organised in the following manner. I shall begin, firstly, by examining both the 'reformist' feminist criticisms of Christianity that were formulated whilst Daly still identified as a Christian and the 'revolutionary' criticism of Christianity in Beyond God the Father - the book that 'celebrated'her departure from the Church. On the basis of this analysis I shall contend that Daly's 'revolutionary' critique of Christian idolatry may be interpreted legitimately, not so much as a radical disjunction from her Christian past, but rather as a radical development of it. For in both her 'reformist' and her 'revolutionary' phase Daly justifies her criticisms largely by an appeal to the claim that Christianity is guilty of idolatry. As I shall show, the very use of the concept of idolatry owes to Christianity in as much as it presupposes a particular 'grammar' of divinity, and rules for theological discourse, that have been shaped within Christianity (and the other monotheistic traditions of Western theism). I shall argue, secondly, that this view is reinforced when we look closer at her attempts to construct a new revolutionary feminist theology. I shall argue that there are indications to suggest that behind the exotic appearance of Daly's 'revolutionary' spiritual path one can again discern a 'grammar' of divinity that is fundamentally co-extensive with that of Christian theism.[2] Finally, I shall explore the implications of Daly's continuing fidelity to certain fundamentals of Christian theology for the contemporary debate between feminist reformists and revolutionaries. I argue that Daly's 'revolutionary' use of themes and concepts that find their roots in the Western theological tradition brings into play a critical distinction between 'Christianity' and 'Western theological tradition' - a distinction that may be of crucial importance to those women who wish to reclaim those values concepts and wisdom in the latter tradition that are of continuing importance.

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2 I employ the term 'grammar' to mean the conceptualisation of God as distinct from everything else in existence. C.f.: David B. Burrell, C.S.C. Burrell Aquinas: God and Action (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979) pp. 1- 65; see also Knowing the Unknowable God: Ibn-Sina, Maimonides, Aquinas (Notre Dame, Indiana: Universiy of Notre Dame Press, 1986).

This in turn opens the door to the possibility of a genuine pluralism in Western theology for Daly's writings illustrate that the theological possibilities open to women who find themselves unable to continue within the institutional matrix of Christianity are not exhausted by the choice between either Christianity or atheism, and that the vector of theological possibilities can be extended by using tools from the broad Western theological tradition.

That the possibility of theological existence in the wilderness of 'postchristianity' now haunts the consciousness of the feminist theologian owes a great deal to Daly's criticism of Christian theology and to her own personal exodus from the Church. It is now over twenty years since Daly initiated the 'exodus' of women (and men) from Memorial Church, in Harvard Yard, that symbolically ushered in the era of the postchristian feminist. During the intervening period the work of an army of feminist philosophers, poets, historians and theologians has not only successfully challenged deeply ingrained cultural and religious prejudices against women, it has also enabled the positive re-construction of a *multiplicity* of non-Christian perspectives on religious questions.[3] Many Christian feminists acknowledge the significance of Daly's uncompromising stand against the injustices perpetuated by patriarchal religion. For example, Rosemary Radford Ruether writes: 'The great importance of a feminist thinker like Mary Daly is ... that she insists on taking herself further and further into [the journey into deep alienation and anger] and insisting that others who wish to be honest follow her. She lays before our eyes the "passion drama" of female crucifixion on the cross of male sexism'.[4] Daly's 'righteous rage' against Christianity and her will to find what she hopes will be a more liberating theological path has an allure for those Christian feminists who themselves sense the ambiguity of their position. Daly's contention that one cannot be both Christian and feminist (one that she holds in common with conservative Christians) is found by many Christian feminists to be, in the (under)statement of the Christian feminist Marjorie Suchoki, 'disturbing'.[5] Thus Carter Heyward suggests, in a comparative study of the theological approaches of Daly and Ruether, that: 'Daly is doing work that Christian feminists ... need not only to take seriously but also to share', in as much as the

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3 For a good example of the diversity of positions in feminist spirituality see Weaving the Visions: New Patterns in Feminist Spirituality Judith Plaskow and Carol P. Christ (eds.) (San Francisco: Harper, 1989). A comparison of this volume with Womanspirit Rising, a similar work written fifteen years earlier and edited by the same authors, illustrates the increasingly complexity and sophistication of feminist perspectives on spirituality.

4 Radford Ruether, Rosemary Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology (London: SCM Press, 1983) p.187.

5 Suchoki, Marjorie, op. cit., p.307.

work of many Christian feminists, including Ruether's work, 'lacks Daly's devastating "sparking" power - a power critical to fundamental change in the world/church'.[6]

Yet the implications of Daly's criticism may not be as 'revolutionary' as some have thought. For when one examines Daly's writings it is evident that fundamentally Daly's criticism of Christianity is a criticism of Christian *idolatry* with regard to the core *symbols* of the tradition. This is, I believe, significant in that the criticism of idolatry presumes a certain theological frame of reference, viz., the discourse of monotheism that was itself mediated to Daly through Christianity. The claim that I wish to put forward, then, is briefly this: that Daly's criticism of the Church and subsequent exodus may be interpreted legitimately as a radical though ultimately 'intra-theological' move. By this I mean that Daly criticises Christian theology in terms of its own theological 'grammar'. Her criticism thus represents more a 'protest' against doctrinal abuse than a wholesale abandonment of the Christian tradition. This view of Daly's positioning relative to Christianity will be supported by drawing attention to the direct continuity between Daly's treatment of idolatry in the 'postchristian' feminist book Beyond God the Father and the concern with idolatry in the Church that mark her earlier *Christian feminist* writings.

Let us begin to unravel this argument by first examining the theological grounds of Daly's 'revolutionary' feminist criticism of Christianity in Beyond God the Father. This text brings together conveniently all of the main points in the criticism of Christianity that Daly developed and refined through a number of earlier articles and lectures.[7] Moreover she never fundamentally deviates from the position set forth in this book and later reaffirms her continuing solidarity with its core theses.[8]

As I have previously attested the sociology of knowledge occupies an important critical site in Daly's feminist writings. Nowhere is this more evident than in her treatment of the history of male hegemony over the process by which theological knowledge has been produced and maintained. She argues that women (as well as other oppressed and 'minority' groups) have not been the 'shapers' of Christian theological culture. Women's experience has not been taken into account in theology. The discipline has thus represented a partial and (when advertising itself as universal) false rendering of the 'human' response and relationship to God. It is an 'ideological construct' which

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6 Ibid., p.71

7 See 'After the Death of God the Father' Commonweal March 12, 1971 pp.7-11; 'The Courage to See' The Christian Century 22 September, 1971, pp.1108-1111; 'Abortion and Sexual Caste' Commonweal 4 February, 1972, pp.415-419; 'The Spiritual Revolution: Women's Liberation as Theological Re-education' Andover Newton Quarterly March, 1972, pp.163-176; 'The Women's Movement: An Exodus Community' Religious Education LXVII September - October, 1972.

8 Gyn/Ecology p.xlvii.

does not reflect a 'balanced or adequate perspective'.[9] Of particular concern to Daly are the core Christian symbols. Daly views language, and symbols in particular, as powerful media for the transmission of cultural meanings. It is by virtue of this symbolic function, she believes, that Christianity has helped to maintain and reproduce the culture of sexual domination. The disastrous 'message' communicated by the central Christian symbols, Daly thinks, is that 'the male is God'. The symbolic divinisation of 'Man', Daly believes, is idolatrous and has served to support the oppressive system of sexual power relations.

Central to Daly's argument is a theoretical distinction between two levels of symbolic/mythic meaning and significance: the conscious-rational level of meaning; and the level of unconscious images. On the conscious-rational level of meaning symbols and myths are somewhat flexible and may yield multiple interpretations and readings. Thus Christian feminists are able to dispute the dominant readings of biblical texts. But there is another level of meaning to symbol and myth in which interpretation is not so openly negotiable, an unconscious layer in which images are potent in shaping individual and collective values. This is the level of meaning to which Daly refers when she quotes Marshall McLuhan's celebrated phrase 'the medium is the message'.[10] Conscious, literal interpretations are transcended at this symbolic level because symbols and myths are able to structure experience independently of any 'rational', conceptual explanation of their meaning.

It is this second level of symbolic meaning that is privileged by Daly in her criticism of Christianity. She does not enter into debates in feminist biblical-historical hermeneutics. She does not trouble to dispute the dominant (oppressive) interpretation on intra-textual or historical grounds. Instead she applies what she calls a 'pragmatic yardstick' in order to assess the 'truth' of theological statements. So she asks: if a particular symbol *can* be used in an oppressive way, and 'has a long history of being "used" in that way', then 'isn't this an indication of some inherent deficiency in the symbol itself?'.[11] The implied answer is affirmative: the truth of a theological formulation is contingent, at least in part, upon its effects.

Working from this foundation, Daly examines the history of the core Christian symbols and the mythic framework out of which they have emerged. She focuses in particular upon the ways in which they have been interpreted and re-interpreted in preaching and theology, analysing their continuing effects on the lives and self-understanding of women.[12] She maintains that the

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9 Beyond God the Father p.10.

10 McLuhan, Marshall Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (N.Y.: 1965), cited in Beyond God the Father p.47.

11 Beyond God the Father p.72.

12 C.f.: Elizabeth Clark and Herbert Richardson (eds.) Women and Religion: A Feminist Sourcebook of Christian Thought (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1977); Rosemary Radford Ruether (ed.) Religion and Sexism:

elevation of these symbols has led Christians into idolatry, the raising to divine status of that which is not 'God'.All theologies that 'hypostasize transcendence', she writes, '... in one way or another objectify "God" as a being, thereby attempt in a self-contradictory way to envisage transcendent reality as finite'.[13] In particular, the conception of God as *'a* Supreme Being' encourages the conception of God (at least on the level of the imagination) as a kind of entity, a super-entity to be sure, but one which is nonetheless a thing in the world alongside other things, limited and finite.

Daly's principle idea is that Christians have anthropomorpised 'God', expressing and representing the deification of 'Man' (through the symbols of Jesus Christ and God the Father) and of male relationality (through the divine Father-Son relationship). The idolatrous objectification of 'God' into 'Man' has had devastating effects for women living in patriarchal culture. As she writes: 'If God is male, then the male is God'.[14] 'God' has functioned so as to bolster the prevailing socio-economic and political status quo.[15] As the Christian feminist theologian Catharina Haulkes has written, with regard to the central images of deity in the Christian tradition, Daly shows us that: '"Anthropomorphic" is almost exclusively translated into "andromorphic".[16]

Let us look at Daly's criticism of the symbol of God the Father. Immediately the distinction between the two levels of symbolic/mythic meaning and significance (the conscious-rational level of meaning, and the level of unconscious images) is brought into analytic play. On the level of conscious-rational meaning she recognises that: 'sophisticated thinkers ... have never intellectually identified God with a Superfather in heaven'.[17] But she thinks it significant that 'even when very abstract conceptualizations of God are formulated in the mind, images survive in the imagination in such a way that a person can function on two different and even apparently contradictory levels at the same time'.[18] In the imaginative faculty, beneath every conscious-rational theological formulation, lie powerful images. Her claim is that philosophical-theological reasoning demonstrating 'God' to be beyond human sexuality has in fact had little discernible impact upon the transmission and interpretation of the core symbols. For, whilst realising that God is not 'really'

Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions (N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1974); Margaret Farley 'Sources of sexual Inequality in the History of Christian Thought'Journal of Religion 56 (1976) 162-76.

13 Beyond God the Father p.19.

14 Ibid., p.19.

15 Ibid.

16 Halkes, Catharina 'Themes of Protest in Feminist Theology Against God the Father' in J. B. Metz Concilium: God as Father (1981) p.104.

17 Beyond God the Father p.17

18 Ibid.

male, theologians still consistently refer to God as 'He' and, on the level of cultural imagination, the imagery conveyed is most definitely that of God as a male/masculine figure. The political power of the Christian symbol of God the Father stems from its deification of both sex (maleness) and gender (a certain conception of masculinity).

The socio-political ramifications of an exclusively male symbol of God are not to be trivialised. As Daly observes: 'If God in "his" heaven is a father ruling "his" people then it is in the nature of things and according to the divine plan and the order of the universe that society be male-dominated'.[19] In sociological terms, the image of God in 'his' heaven has served both as a model *of* divine existence and a model *for* male domination. In the sex-exclusive symbol of the Father God, a finite, conditioned reality, man, is raised in the imagination to the level of that which is ultimate and unconditioned. In symbolically deifying maleness the symbol breaks the fundamental rule of theological grammar: *Deus non et in genere*.God cannot be identified with any finite or compositional entity. Daly is, of course, fully aware of the properly metaphorical and analogical function of all God-language. Her contention is, however, that on the level of unconscious imagery such rules have no applicative power.

In addition to the symbolic deification of the male sex, Daly argues, Christianity has sanctified a certain construal of masculinity in its assimilation of both the Hebrew Scriptures and, later, Greek philosophy with their references to the 'character' and attributes of the Father. The resulting picture of God is, she argues, thoroughly patriarchal. She compares God the Father to the figure of Don Corleone, the Mafia 'Godfather' in the film of the same name, someone who unites in his person a psychpathic tendency towards violence and destruction as well as a capacity for tenderness and loyalty. This mind-set has manifested itself in the 'often cruel behaviour of Christians toward unbelievers and toward dissenters among themselves'; a fact that, Daly thinks, 'suggests a great deal not only about the values of a society dominated by that image, but also about how that image itself functions in relation to behaviour'.[20] Moreover, this kind of symbolisation of deity effectively 'castrates' or 'robs' women of their 'potency'.[21] Males enjoy a sense of continuity between their own gender image and that of God. Women who are already socially powerless are made to feel deviant: their gender identity lies, in symbolic terms, in opposition to that of Man/God.

Such a characterisation of deity is, for Daly, clearly ideological in that it is functions to reinforce prevailing social arrangements. (That this is the case is revealed by her later question: 'In a

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19 Ibid. p.13.

20 Ibid. p.16.

21 Ibid. p.19.

matriarchal or a diarchal society, what credibility would the image of a divine patriarch have?'.[22] The implied response is, of course, none). The omnipotent 'Father'*has* functioned to sanctify the system of sexual domination by making it appear 'natural' and 'according to the divine plan'. This strategy has been remarkably successful, and has helped to perpetuate sexism through the two millennia in which Christianity has enjoyed a widespread cultural influence.

Let us turn now to Daly's assault upon Christology. Daly continues to explore the notion of 'Incarnation', but in her understanding the concept expresses more an historical-ontological project for humanity than a once and for all event located in the past.[23] Moreover, one senses that Daly stops short at the idea that any human being can be identified with 'God' - either in the past or in the future. What Daly rebels against, I repeat, is the unique identification of the male Jesus with God. She writes: 'Exclusively masculine symbolism for God, for the notion of divine "incarnation" in human nature, and for the human relationship to God reinforce sexual hierarchy'.[24] Like the symbol of God the Father, the myth of Christ has been 'objectified in the structures of political power'.[25] Its 'social extensions' take the form of male power over women through relationships of domination in the family, in the Church and in society. Nowhere, however, does Daly reject *a priori* the rationality of 'incarnation' as such. (This appears to me to be a sound approach. For, clearly, whilst we do not know what it is to be both 'human' and 'divine', the doctrine of Incarnation does not immediately involve one in contradiction).[26] Instead she concentrates upon the effects of the sex-exclusivity of the symbol.

Daly's criticism of the theological discourse concerning the divinity of the man Jesus , follows the approach mapped out in her analysis of the symbol of God the Father. Again she emphasises the damaging effects upon human social thought and behaviour of construals of ultimate reality through exclusively male images. The problem with the symbol of Christ, she considers, is as follows: 'The image itself is one-sided, as far as sexual identity is concerned, and it is precisely on

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22 Daly 'The Spiritual Dimension of Women's Liberation' in Sneja Gunew (ed.)A Reader in Feminist Knowledge (London: Routledge, 1991) pp.335-341, at 337.

23 See 'Feminist Postchristian Introduction'The Church and the Second Sex p.39.

24 Beyond God the Father p.4.

25 Ibid., p.140.

26 As Herbert McCabe writes: 'It may be part of the meaning of man that he is not any creature; it cannot be part of the *meaning* of man that he is not God. God is not just one of the items in some universe which have to be excluded if it is just man that you are talking about. God could not be an item in any universe. It follows that there is not, after all, the same contradiction in saying that Jesus is both man and God as there would be in saying that a circle is a square or that Jesus is both man and sheep'. Herbert McCabe God Matters (London: Cassell, 1987) p.56-8. For a more detailed delination of McCabe's position see in the essays 'The Involvement of God', 'The Myth of God Incarnate' and 'The Incarnation. An Exchange with Professor Maurice Wiles' in the same volume.

the wrong side, since it fails to counter sexism and functions to glorify maleness.[27] This statement encapsulates the essence of Daly's criticism of Christology. The statement makes three assertions: firstly, that the image is one-sided; secondly, that the image glorifies maleness; and thirdly, that in glorifying maleness it fails to counter sexism.

Let us take the first point, that the image is one-sided. Like the symbol of God the Father, the symbol of Christ is sex-exclusive. Unlike the symbol of the Father, however, the male symbol of Christ is *supposed* to symbolise 'humanity' as well as God. Daly wants to say that a sex-exclusive symbol cannot perform this function. (Indeed women in the Roman Catholic tradition - to which Daly formerly belonged - have found themselves excluded from Holy Orders for the related reason that a woman cannot be said to 'resemble' Christ - who symbolises humanity). The problem is not alleviated by asserting, with Paul in Galatians 3:27-28, that 'Christ' is somehow devoid of sexuality. For as Daly later comments: 'What sense does it make to assert that in Christ "there is neither male nor female"? Wasn't 'Christ' an exclusively masculine symbol, even though somewhat 'feminized'? What on earth, then, could the text mean?'[28]

Now let us turn to the second point, namely, that the image 'glorifies maleness'. The problem of the symbolic deification of maleness in the Hebrew narratives has been compounded, Daly thinks, by Christian fixation with the historical figure of Jesus 'in such a manner that Christian conceptions of divinity and of the image of God are all objectified in Jesus'.[29] She notes that 'the "particularity" of Jesus' maleness has not functioned in the same way as the "particularity" of his Semitic identity or of his youth'.[30] So neither Gentiles nor those who have entered their fourth decade of life have been banned from taking Holy Orders. Daly accuses Christians of 'Christolatry', of making an idol of Jesus of Nazareth by assigning infinite value to one who was 'a limited human being'.[31] The implicit message conveyed by the doctrine of the Incarnation is that 'to be human is to be male is to be the Son of God'.[32] Thus are males again raised on high. The problem is made more intractable by the idea of revelation as located once and for all in the distant past. For orthodox Christians the canon is closed, and with it any question of present or future revelation. This, Daly argues, is a misrepresentation of God's saving activities leading inevitably towards a political reinforcement of the social and ecclesiastical status quo.

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27 Beyond God the Father p.72.

28 'Feminist Postchristian Introduction'The Church and the Second Sex p.22.

29 Beyond God the Father p.79.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., p.69.

32 Ibid., p.139.

Let us turn, finally, to the third point, that the glorification of maleness is 'precisely on the wrong side' of the division of human sexual identity 'since it fails to counter sexism'. It is precisely in its idolatrous deification of maleness that the symbol of Christ is seen by Daly to be counterproductive to effecting 'salvation' for women in patriarchal society. How does this follow? In order to appreciate Jesus' soteriological irrelevance for women, Daly thinks, we must turn our attention to the roots of the problem to which Jesus is claimed, by Christians, to be the answer: the mystery of sin/evil and its origins. This involves going back to the book of Genesis. Daly's thesis is that the Christian articulation of evil has been skewed and that fundamental errors in this account have led to a 'misnaming' of the mythic 'Fall' and 'original sin', and, vitally, to 'a dislocation of the Christian "solution"'.[33] Her feminist 'renaming' of sin reveals the 'inherent deficiencies ... in the fabric of Christology'.[34] On one level the myth of the Fall is an attempt to articulate and cope with the 'confusion experienced by human beings trying to make sense of the tragedy and absurdity of the human condition'.[35] On an 'unconscious' level, however, the story exposes 'the tragedy of sexual injustice'.[36] The 'Fall' is traditionally viewed as a consequence of personal alienation from God (expressed through the sins of pride and disobedience). In Daly's analysis of the myth the category of 'sin', formerly applied to the personal realm, is seen in socio-structural terms, with sexism at its root. The 'message' that the story 'unintentionally conveys' is, then, that in patriarchal society women are 'the primordial scapegoats'.[37] When we turn to popular theological culture to test this reading we can see that Eve/woman is portrayed as the originator of sin and evil and the cause of 'man's' Fall. This 'sin' is 'original' in the sense that it is the root of all subsequent hierarchical dualism. Moreover, women's status as Other is an 'inherited' condition, part of the world into which women are born, conditioning our range of choices before we are even in a position to act.[38] It is thus 'woman' who is the original objectification of evil, the primordial alien that must be destroyed. This misnaming of Eve/woman, Daly maintains, leads to corresponding misnaming of Adam/man (master and ruler of woman and nature), God the Father (warrior king) and, ultimately, Jesus.[39]

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33 Ibid., p.47; see also p.71ff.

34 Ibid., p.78.

35 Ibid., p.45.

36 Ibid., p.46.

37 Ibid., p.47.

38 Ibid., p.76. As I have already intimated, just how this state of affairs came about historically is not fully theorised by Daly, though there are indications to suggest that she understands the roots of the problem to lie deep in human psychopathology. See this thesis p.76ff.

39 Ironically David Shields attempts to take Daly's concept of the original sin of Adam (rather than Eve) and construct a Christology along the lines of Irenaeus in *Adversus Haeresis* that Christ must reverse the sins of

In the first instance, Jesus has functioned as mankind's 'most illustrious scapegoat' (Szasz) and in this respect he has been a disastrous role model for women to 'imitate'. For though, in the context of ritual, the (male) priest is the one to share in the noble sacrifice which was Jesus', in reality the negative qualities of Jesus' status as victim are projected onto women. Thus: 'The qualities that Christianity *idealizes*, especially for women, are also those of the victim: sacrificial love, passive acceptance of suffering, humility, meekness, etc. Since these are the qualities idealised in Jesus "who died for our sins", his functioning as a model reinforces the scapegoat syndrome for women'.[40] Following Valerie Saiving Goldstein,[41] Daly suggests that such an emphasis may be the product of male guilt regarding 'the behavioural excesses of the stereotypic male'.[42] The enforcement of such a morality, though perhaps fitting for men, has stymied the moral growth of women. Women have not, on the whole, had the *chances* to err in the same ways as men. Their social powerlessness has not usually provided the opportunity to think themselves more worthy than they are in actuality. Pride and self-aggrandisement have not historically been 'female' sins. Indeed, as Saiving Goldstein points out, women may have developed a tendency towards a different kind of moral failure - the failure to actualise and assert themselves. Goldstein's thesis is echoed by Daly who conceives of women's 'sin' as their 'internalization of blame and guilt'.[43] The legitimation by Jesus of stereotypically 'feminine' moral values upon women (and other subordinate groups) has therefore been catastrophic. 'The real motivations and values operative in society' are mystified and the confrontation with 'the powers of unjust acquisition' is hindered.[44]

In the second instance Daly repudiates implicitly the idea that 'salvation' can be effected by a male on a woman's behalf; an idea that perpetuates what Marjorie Suchoki calls the image of 'helpless-female-saved-by-male'[45] that pervades women's everyday existence. Central to traditional Christology is, of course, the idea of atonement - the reconciliation of humankind to God through Christ's sacrificial death. Daly's articulation of this point is characteristically uninhibited. 'The dogma of the "hypostatic union"', she writes, 'is beginning to be perceived by some women as a kind of huge joke. Under the conditions of patriarchy the role of liberating the human race from the

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Adam. See 'Christ: a Male Feminist View'Encounter 45 (summer 1984), pps. 221-232.

40 Beyond God the Father p.77.

41 Goldstein, Valerie Saiving 'The Human Situation: A Feminine View'Journal of Religion 40 (April, 1960), pp.100-12.

42 Beyond God the Father p.100

43 Ibid., p.49.

44 Ibid., p.101

45 Suchoki, op.cit., p.311.

original sin of sexism would seem to be precisely the role that a male symbol *cannot* perform.[46] Again, as Suchoki suggests, it may perhaps be that this kind of 'saviour' 'might be a corrective for the male psyche...but [it is] certainly destructive for the female'.[47] Far from effecting healing the symbol of Jesus Christ accentuates and exacerbates the basic problem of female victimisation. She concludes that in the future: 'It will ... become increasingly evident that exclusively masculine symbolism for the ideal of "incarnation" or for the ideal of the human search for fulfilment will not do'.[48] She prophesies that as the plausibility of an exclusively male symbol for incarnation loses credibility, and eventually dies, so there may arise a greater awareness of 'the power of Being in all persons'. Here, then, is a proposal that incarnation may be viewed as an ontological-historical project for us all. The point is, finally, not to deny Jesus' revelatory capacity; the point is rather 'to affirm that the creative presence of the Verb can be revealed at every historical moment, in every person and culture'.[49] In order to affirm such an understanding of incarnation, however, doctrinal statements of Jesus' uniqueness and super-eminence need to be surpassed.

In summary, I have given an account of Daly's analysis of the main problems for feminists surrounding the dominant Christian religious symbols. Her critique of Christian symbols focuses upon the idolatry of anthropomorphic and, what is more, exclusively male symbols for deity. She argues that it is not simply the case that, historically, Christianity has perpetuated certain ideologies about women (ideologies which, theoretically, could be subject to a programme of demystification), but that its founding symbols are inappropriate, indeed counterproductive, to the liberation of women in patriarchal society because they deify males/masculinity. And, as we have seen, she holds that the 'male' is, in symbolic terms, soteriologically impotent for women. As Anne Carr notes of Daly's work: it is precisely *because* male symbols have 'functioned so effectively in history to legitimate the subordination of women' that Daly believe them to be of ' no help to alienated women'.[50] Whilst she is aware of the Christian argument that images and symbols are not to be identified with, but merely point toward, transcendent reality, Daly insists that 'the medium is the message'. Thus the conceptualisation of God through masculine symbolism creates the deep-rooted

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46 Beyond God the Father p.72.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid., p.71.

49 Ibid.

50 Carr, Ann 'Is a Christian Feminist Theology Possible?' Theological Studies 43 (1982) pp.279-297, at p.292.

expectation that all significant power and status belongs 'naturally' to the male.[51] On this criterion the idea of a unique male saviour is simply one more legitimation of male rule.

There is, Daly thinks, hope that religious symbols which serve to support vested social interests may yet be replaced. For symbols are not ahistorical. They are born from specific socio-cultural contexts. This means that: 'Religious symbols fade and die when the cultural situation that gave rise to them and supported them ceases to give them plausibility'.[52] Whilst the death of once meaningful symbols 'generates anxiety', Daly argues that it is 'part of the risk involved in a faith which accepts the relativity of all symbols and recognises that clinging to these as fixed and ultimate is self-destructive and idolatrous'.[53] In Beyond God the Father her conviction is that 'the general trend toward democratization of society and the emergence of technology' are changing the context out of which the traditional theistic symbols arose.[54] It is, however, the 'women's movement' that, in her view, 'appears destined to lay the key role in the overthrow of such oppressive elements in traditional theism'.[55] The impression that is conveyed is that Daly views feminism as capable of cleansing and liberating Christian theism itself which, as I have shown, she believes to have fallen into an idolatrous attitude with regard to its central symbols.

The key issue is not then whether the images have effects - they clearly do - but whether conscious theological re-interpretation of the core symbols can transform the images conveyed in such a manner that the symbols become liberatory rather than oppressive. Daly infers, on the basis of the analysis of the past and present effects of the core symbols, that the future of Christianity cannot be essentially different: the symbols are irreformable. (The inferential nature and grounds of Daly's argument contra Christianity are important and should be noted. For, other feminists - working upon the same material and similar evidence - wish to defend the possibility of different forms of Christian feminism). In saying that the symbols are irreformable and that Christianity is 'essentially sexist'Daly argues that simply rereading the symbols will not be enough to divest them of their oppressive effects. Note, for example, her comments about Leonard Swidler's attempts to reclaim Jesus for feminism. She writes: "[His] assumption that one can extract 'religious truth' from 'time-conditioned categories' seems to mean that we can shuck off the debris of a long history of

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51 Martin Soskice, Janet 'Can a Feminist call God Father?' in Alvin KimelSpeaking the Christian God: the Holy Trinity and the Challenge of Feminism (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1992).

52 Beyond God the Father p.15

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid., p.18. Daly's faith in both 'democracy' and 'technology' wanes by the time of Gyn/Ecology.

55 Beyond God the Father p.18.

oppressiveness and get to return to the pristine purity of the original revelation".[56] Daly does not believe that this is an adequate solution.[57] It is inadequate because whilst concepts can be corrected and changed, images must either be shattered or exorcised. For Daly, then, it is not enough to consciously re-work the symbols - as Christian feminists attempt to do - because this does not alter the fundamental images that are transmitted to women living in patriarchal society.

Carol Christ goes some way to articulating the challenge posed to Christian feminists by Daly when she writes: 'A serious Christian response to Daly's criticism of the core symbolism of Christianity either will have to show that the core symbolism of Father and Son does not have the effect of reinforcing and legitimating male power and female submission, or it will have to transform Christian imagery at its very core'.[58] In my view it is difficult to see how such a transformation can be achieved. One may, of course, seek to *consciously* reread the symbols in different ways. But it seems highly unlikely, in patriarchal society, that by simply rereading narratives women will be able to dislodge the basic images that exude from the symbols. The following illustration shows us why. Feminist theologian and activist Elizabeth Bettenhausen recalls asking a class to re-write stories about Jesus as if he were a woman. What Bettenhausen proposes to her students is effectively to reread the passion narrative in what seems quite a radical way. One of her students duly rewrote the story in terms of the humiliation and gang-rape of the Christ(a). 'Ever since', Bettenhausen writes, 'I have wondered, Would women ever imagine forming a religion around the rape of a woman? Would we ever construe gang-rape as a salvific event for other women? What sort of a god would such an event reveal?'[59] It is highly significant that what on the conscious-rational level appears to be a singularly radical rereading, is in fact just as damaging (in the kind of imaginative picture it portrays of women) as the 'original' reading. As Bettenhausen observes, a sex-change did little to alter the effects of the images conveyed in the student's mind. For even a symbolically 'female' Christ(a) remains mired in the sado-masochistic imagery of crucifixion, and the ethics of self-denial and self-loss that have been consequent upon Christ's 'acceptance' of sacrificial death. The attempt consciouslyto reinterpret the central myths of Christianity is then problematic as a feminist strategy.

The net effect of Daly's criticisms is to throw down the gauntlet to Christian women, implicitly challenging them either to justify their spiritual and theological allegiances to

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56 Beyond God the Father p.83. Daly is commenting on Swidler's article 'Jesus was a Feminist' inThe Catholic World (January, 1971) pp.177-83.

57 Beyond God the Father p.83.

58 Christ 'The New Feminist Theology: A Review of the Literature' p.205.

59 Bettenhausen, Elizabeth 'Foreword' to Joanne Carlson Brown and Carole R. Bohn (eds)Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse: A Feminist Critique (N.Y.: The Pilgrim Press, 1990; first printed 1989) p.xii.

Christianity, or else to join the 'exodus' community of spiritual ex-patriots dedicated to finding alternative theological resources and avenues of religious expression. For the implication is that for Christianity to become 'anti-' or 'post-patriarchal', it would have to surrender or completely transform that which (in Daly's terms) is 'essential' to it, that which makes it what it is, namely, the central symbols. Yet the symbols themselves could not be changed without Christianity effectively transmuting into another religion altogether. What Daly's criticism of the central Christian symbols represents then is a call for what Naomi Goldenberg has called 'a changing of the Gods', a transmutation of the symbols through which we relate in worship to the ultimate.

I turn now to my second major point, which is that Daly'scriticism of Christianity in the 'postchristian' bookBeyond God the Father is fundamentally a continuation of earlier Christian feminist criticism of idolatry in the Church. In the years immediately prior to leaving the Church Daly wrote a number of articles on the subject of idolatry in Christian thought and practice. I shall review three articles - 'Dispensing with Trivia',[60] 'Return of the Protestant Principle'[61] and 'If You Could Make One Change in the Church, What Would It Be?'[62] - published in the liberal Catholic journal Commonweal between May 1968 and May 1970.

In 'Dispensing with Trivia' (31 May, 1968), Daly explores the possibilities for Christian renewal in the light of Bonhöffer's idea of 'a world come of age'. She begins by reiterating Aquinas' declaration of theological limitation: 'we cannot know what God is, but rather what He is not'. She then proceeds to argue that in the modern world, with its scientific and technological achievements, human consciousness has changed such that it is now difficult if not impossible to accept Christian doctrines as they are presented by the Church. She writes: 'In the age of the "death of God" the traditional categories of Christian belief and the institutional structures have become meaningless or at least irrelevant to most people'.[63] The blame for this situation is laid in part upon 'vested institutional interests' who have promulgated an out-dated and 'distorted' concept of 'faith'.[64] In response she turns to address doctrinal underdevelopment in the Catholic Church, particularly with regard to the doctrine of 'faith'. She denounces the prevalent conception of faith as 'an act of knowledge with a low degree of evidence' because it leads to the idea that the believer must use his/her will to compensate for the lack of evidence. This effectively translates as willing or deciding

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60 Daly, 'Dispensing with Trivia'Commonweal 88 (31 May, 1968) pp.322-25.

61 Daly, 'Return of the Protestant Principle'Commonweal 90 (6 June, 1969), pp.338-41.

62 Daly, 'If You Could Make One Change in the Church, What Would It Be?'Commonweal 90 (1 May, 1970) p.161.

63 'Dispensing with Trivia' p.323.

64 Ibid.

to believe what the Church says has been 'divinely revealed'.[65] This notion is, she maintains, the very opposite of that "faith seeking understanding" which has driven the saint and the mystic toward transcendence'.[66] Daly puts forward a Tillichean concept of faith understood as 'the state of being ultimately concerned'. Unlike the more traditional idea of faith, Tillich understands faith to involve 'risk' and 'doubt'. She continues: 'It is forever driving beyond itself and therefore recognizes the inadequacy of every formulation. This is not to say that it refuses to see the need for creeds and formulae, but it does recognize the need for continual criticism of them'.[67] A purification of 'faith', she believes, inevitably leads to a confrontation with shallow conceptions of God. Intrinsic to the cleansing of faith required for Christian renewal is a purging of shallow conceptualisations of God. Whilst analogical language of God remains valid, she avers, 'none of our images or concepts are adequate to express the reality of God' who is 'unfathomable abyss'.[68] The image of a tyrannical father-god is singled out for special criticism. When it is fortified by the divine attributes of omnipotence and immutability, this image communicates the idea of a 'supreme being' who 'paralyzes man's will to transcendence'.[69] Such a perception of God is erroneous at a fundamental theological level. Daly's Thomist background had taught her that, whilst the *quid est* of God is beyond our human knowledge (and thus we do not know what it is to be God), we are able to know, through the exercise of reason, that God cannot be like creatures (finite, limited and composite etc.). She recognises that the concept of God in scholastic theology is more subtle than the crude 'popular' characterisations of God to which she alludes. She also acknowledges that 'there are strong counterbalancing elements, not least of which are the insistence that God is all-loving and that man has free will'[70] that offset the simplistic images promulgated in and through popular piety. But she qualifies this evaluation when she writes that these 'subtleties however logical they may have seemed to theologians, have not been psychologically meaningful'.[71] In other words, the abstract intricacies of theological discourse have not filtered through to the level of images which, she suggests, can exert influence upon behaviour.

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65 Ibid., p.324.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid. Daly states later that she does not wish to give the impression that the classic attributes are meaningless theologically, only that their proper meaning will only emerge when theology begins to take into account 'recent developments in epistemology, in psychology, and in the analysis of language'. 'Underground Theology'(response to Aquinas M. Ferrara's critique of 'Dispensing with Trivia'Commonweal 88 (9 August, 1968) pp. 532-34, at p.533.

In order to move beyond such images a new understanding of faith is required. Daly eneters into dialogue with Paul Tillich's work. In 'Return of the Protestant Principle' she affirms the need for a constant interplay between what Tillich terms the 'Protestant principle' and the 'Catholic substance' that together constitute complementary aspects of the Christian tradition. The latter is described as 'the concrete embodiment of the Spiritual Presence, that is, the body of religious symbols and objectifications'.[72] The Protestant principle is 'basically an attitude of criticism which recognizes the relativity of all objectifications of faith, that is, of all symbols, such as sacraments and creeds, and of all structures, whether institutional or verbal. It is an attitude of protest against all false securities, which implies a radical questioning of prevailing ideas and practices'. It is this attitude of protest against idolatry that, she argues, must be actualised by Catholic Christians in the late 1960s so as to restore balance to a tradition which, she believes, is in danger of falling into 'demonic idolatry of "sacred" doctrines, objects and social systems'.[73]

The main points in both of the aforementioned articles are summed up by Daly in May, 1970 when she was asked: 'If you could make one change in the Church, what would it be?'.[74] Daly replied that since idolatry was the biggest single problem facing the Church she wished to see Christians adopting an attitude of iconoclasm with regard to ecclesiastical 'idols'. Explaining her position she writes:

> I take idolatry to mean treating a finite reality as if it were ultimate. In this case one fixes one's ultimate concern upon something limited in itself. This might be a group of institutional structures, a set of rituals, verbal formulae of doctrine, or persons identified with any of these. In any case there is a short-circuiting of the essential dynamism of faith and a fixation upon the temporal.[75]

In her view the Catholic Church participates in 'widespread idolatry' with regard to its structures. The appropriate theological response to this phenomenon is, she argues, iconoclasm - ' a breaking of the idols'. This need not mean eradicating ritual, doctrine or ecclesiastical offices. But it does mean that believers should view them as 'relative to the infinite reality in which they participate but which they cannot fully express'.[76] Changes in attitude toward the mediational structures of Catholic faith will, of course, mean 'abandoning some of the old securities' such as the sense, order and religious

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72 'Return of the Protestant Principle' p.338.
73 Ibid.
74 'If You Could Make One Change in the Church, What Would It Be?' p.161.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.

safety that they bring in favour of 'the quest for transcendence' as that 'which is what Christianity is all about'.[77]

Daly's *'postchristian'* criticism of Christian idolatry with regard to the central symbols of the tradition is therefore prefigured in her earlier *Christian* feminist writings. Significantly, in both phases Daly presumes a certain theological frame of reference, viz., the monotheistic framework that Daly inherits from Christianity. The same fundamental grammar of divinity is discernible in both Daly's Christian feminist work and in Beyond God the Father - a grammar predicated upon the recognition of God's absolute distinction from every thing in existence. Indeed the raison d'etre of the latter work as the need to 'de-reify' the prevailing Christian concept of God is co-extensive with Daly's earlier Christian feminist concern topurify faith by confronting shallow concepts of God. There are, moreover, marked continuities between the best in the Christian tradition and 'postchristian' existence. As Daly writes:

> When women enter feminist postchristian time/space, whatever might have been genuine in 'doctrine' is not lost but rather transformed, wrenched out of the old context, as we are living, willing, thinking, being our own thoughts. If some reality to which a Christian doctrine was trying to point survives this leap into the postchristian context, that is all right, but what matters is that we survive and keep moving.[78]

Of crucial importance to Daly throughout is the 'quest for transcendence', the perpetual movement and striving toward 'a higher level of existence and toward the hidden but living God'.[79] For Daly this quest represents the quintessence of true faith.

The question arises as to the difference between Daly's Christian feminist criticism of idolatry and her 'revolutionary' criticism? Common to both critical phases is the recognition that there exists a deep and pervasive prejudice against women in the Church. The theological rubicon that separates Daly's reformist criticism from her revolutionary criticism isan alternative perception and assessment of what is 'essential' to Christianity. Specifically, what is seen in her Christian feminist writings to be 'accidental' and culturally conditioned is seen in her revolutionary writings to be 'essential' to the Christian tradition.

In the Christian feminist work The Church and the Second Sex Daly argues that the bias against women in the Church represents a 'distortion' of Christian believing. As we saw in chapter one whilst Daly acknowledges the perspicacity of Beauvoir's analysis of the ways in which the Church is culpable for masking sexual oppression, she diverges from the philosopher on the

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77 Ibid., p.162.

78 'Feminist Postchristian Introduction'The Church and the Second Sex p.40.

79 'Dispensing with Trivia', p.325.

question of whether such ideology is intrinsic to Church teaching. For Daly misogyny and discrimination stand in contradiction to the 'essence' of 'authentic' Christian faith which consists in 'the equal dignity of all human beings as persons'.[80] The failure to materialise the 'essence' of Christianity in and through history is a result of Christian moral failure to practice the fundamental ideals of the faith and in misinterpretations of the central symbols of the faith and of the thought of some of Church's leading thinkers. The history of sexism in the Church is seen, therefore, to be 'accidental', rather than 'essential', to Christianity. This hermeneutical model allows her to rescue what she perceives to be the most important features of the Christian kerygma. In order to get back into line with 'authentic tradition', she argues, the 'distortions of faith' which have led to the current situation must be exposed. As part of her reformist project in this work she entreats exegetes to sharpen their critical tools. 'Those who have benefited from the insights of a later age', she writes, 'have the task of distinguishing elements which are sociological in origin from the life-fostering, personalist elements which pertain essentially to the Christian message'.[81] Whilst recognising the damage done to women by Church structures, symbols and doctrines, therefore, Daly remains at liberty to emphasise the inherent capacity of the Church to renew its understanding of its major doctrines through the application of this critical hermeneutic. Strands within the biblical and theological text which do not render particular groups, classes or races in humanist, egalitarian terms are to be discounted, on her criteria, as merely the product of primitive socio-political arrangements.

In Daly's revolutionary critique the Christian feminist analysis is turned upon its head: that which hitherto represented a distortion of the essential truth of Christianity (exclusion of women from the priesthood, the subordination of women to men in the family) henceforth becomes the logical conclusion of its central message. She rejects the 'ontological' distinction between the 'essential' tradition and its historical patriarchal 'accidents'. She maintains that the patriarchal matrix of all language be taken into account. This means that she must reject all biblical and other cultural phallocentric texts; she even goes so far as to separate herself from the history of the reformist Daly of The Church and the Second Sex.[82] Daly's conclusion is couched in characteristically forthright language. 'The myths and symbols of Christianity', she writes in an article published in 1975, ' are essentially sexist...'.[83] The prejudice and discrimination against

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80 Daly supports this criterion by reference to the creation account in Genesis 1:26f, to Jesus' dealings with women and the Pauline attempt, in Galatians 3:27-28, to transcend the fixed dichotomy of sex-role stereotyping. The Church and The Second Sex p. 83.

81 Ibid., p. 84.

82 See 'Feminist Postchristian Introduction'The Church and the Second Sex

83 'The Qualitative Leap Beyond Patriarchal Religion' Quest: A Feminist Quarterly 1/4 (Spring, 1975) pps.

women that she had formerly attributed to hypocrisy and double standards is now viewed as somehow intrinsic to the logic of Christian knowledge generation.

Daly's criticism of Christianity is undoubtedly an important contribution to the broader feminist assault upon the cultural patterns of androcentric tradition. In bringing to critical attention unexamined aspects of Christian myths, doctrines and symbols that contradict the equality of persons she helped to ferment a serious theological debate as to what is central and foundational to the Christian religion. It is notable that she does not go so far as to question, in any serious way, the fundamental theological grammar of Christian believing. Her criticism is thus more in line with 'prophetic protest' than with 'revolution'.

The criticism of Christianity marks only one stage of her feminist spiritual quest. That the practise of theology is possible and even necessary for Daly after ostensibly abandoning the Church owes to the fact that her criticism does not signal the death of 'faith' in God. As we have seen, it was that very faith which precipitated the criticism of Christian idolatry with regard to its central symbols which, in turn, led to her departure from Church. Moreover one of the most noteworthy features of her work after leaving the Church is a strong and pervasive sense of the 'presence' of God beyond the 'absence' of god the idol. Daly's basic faith in the 'Power of Be-ing', then, remains undiminished by her critique of Christian idolatry. Indeed on one level the way forward is suddenly clearer now that the 'mirror image' of Man 'writ large' has been smashed.[84] For the criticism of the Christian symbolisation of God, coupled with her claim that there is no way that the symbols can be cleansed of their oppressive connotations, leads her to assert that a whole new symbolic must emerge from women's experience as a precondition for women to theologise effectively. Because women have been trapped psychically and cognitively in 'male' symbolic space we have not been at liberty to name toward God from our own unique female perspectives. In confronting this problem, Daly thinks, women who have received theological training will find that a complete overhaul of theological methodology may be required. Established critical tools, sources and research criteria are suddenly revealed to be inadequate to the task of articulating the religious experiences of such women.

In Beyond God the Father Daly begins an attempt at theological construction by separating her method explicitly from three approaches which were (and, for the most part, still are) the dominant matrices of public theological knowledge: neo-orthodoxy (and orthodoxy), objectivity and liberalism. None of these theological models are, in Daly's view, adequate to 'express the revolutionary potential of women's liberation for challenging the forms in which

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20, 21.

consciousness incarnates itself and for changing consciousness'.[85] The matter of a feminist theological method transcends all attempts to 'reform' existing theological models because theological culture has been male culture and because even the usual means of theological dissent are too restricted.[86] The only way for women to end what she considers the male domination of theology is, Daly argues, for women to begin to 'name' towards God in ways that are in accord with their own experiences.

What is perhaps most striking about Daly's search for sources and indicators of personal transcendence in both periods is the way in which elements from her Christian past condition and structure her quest. Christianity continues to be represented, of course, both as the cultural backdrop of her philosophy and as the object of her polemic. But this dependence upon Christianity for polemic purposes is not what I have in mind here. I argue that there exist substantive 'survivals' of Christian conceptuality even in Daly's 'separatist' texts such that the form and structure of her discourse remains substantially in debt to Christian theology. Daly's own textual performance reveals the clues. An analysis of her later textual practice suggests that, whilst she was not a member of the Church, in either a fideistic or an institutional sense, her thought continued to be guided by many of the norms and criteria that govern traditional Christian theology. Some beliefs are jettisoned, of course, (the confession of Jesus as the Christ), but other beliefs are given creative re-articulation (one thinks of the ideals of incarnation and of redemption), whilst yet others remain essentially unchanged (the doctrine of creation).

Let us examine the religious symbols that Daly 'plays' with in her 'postchristian' phase. She argues that because women's experience is 'revelatory' it can be used to critique extant traditions. There may still be intuitions and elements within Christianity that can be brought forward in the new religious consciousness but ultimately women's experience provides the final norm for feminist theology. In Beyond God the Father, the symbols that she 'sounds out' in order to render that experience in all its dimensions are more frequently than not plays or reversals of Christian concepts. A conscious dialecticism is illustrated through her continued use of Christian vocabulary (such as 'church', 'covenant' and 'sin'). Daly's aim in drawing upon such symbols is to subvert the said vocabulary by re-working their meanings and playing them off against the originals which remain embedded in Christian discourse.[87] She gives as an example the word 'exodus' as it is applied to the community of feminists. Exodus is, of course,

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84 Beyond God the Father p.28ff.

85 Beyond God the Father p.7.

86 Ibid., p.22

a word straight out of the Judaeo-Christian context. But Daly argues that when it is used in connection with feminism: 'The word's meaning is stripped of its patriarchal, biblical context, while at the same time speaking to and beyond that context'.[88] She turns the myth of the Fall upon its head so that, instead of Eve/woman being responsible for the entrance of (personal) 'sin' and alienation into the world, Adam/man is deemed culpable for the introduction of the paradigmatic (structural) 'sin' of sexism after which all other forms of oppression are moulded. At this stage then Daly's project is about changing the semantic context for theological concepts rather than providing a wholly new vocabulary. So she defines the women's movement in quasi-Christian terms: it is an 'antichurch', a 'cosmic covenant', a 'charismatic community', an 'exodus community'. The phallocractic value system underpinning the biblical use of the word is cut away or exorcised.

Since 1975 Daly's symbolic horizons have broadened by moving from the recontextualization of primarily Christian symbols to an attempt to mythologise[89] feminist experience. She has developed her theological self-understanding by reference to such terms as 'A-Mazing Amazon', 'Positively Revolting Hag', 'Witch' and, lately, 'Crafty Pirate' - designations which are purported to be rooted in a 'metapatriarchal', 'Elemental' feminist matrix that both transcends and takes mythic precedence over Christianity. This is not to say that she abandons Christian vocabulary altogether. She continues to criticise Christianity and to use originally Christian theological terms to make statements about the processes of patriarchal knowledge-legitimation.[90] But in the main her purpose is to chart a political-theological map by which to find a way out of the phallocractic 'maze' for which Christianity functions as a legitimation. Since 'Patriarchy appears to be "everywhere"'[91] the only way to escape from it is to 'separate' from it by discovering or creating an 'Other World'.

Here the emphasis is as much upon trying to discover and to Name her own reality as upon trying to 'castrate' sexist thought forms. Gone are the linguistic reversals of Christian concepts such as the Church/antichurch, Christ/antichrist - concepts with which she played, in Beyond God the Father, and which showed her to be still in reaction to Christianity.[92] In their place are positive, utopian poetics, puns and new word creation. She had spoken earlier about the need for new symbolisation, ' a remythologising of western religion' in the wake of the

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87 'Feminist Postchristian Introduction'The Church and the Second Sex p.40.
88 Beyond God the Father p.8
89 For the project of remythologisation as applied to Christianity see Sallie McFague Models of God (London: SCM, 1987), p.33
90 Consider her employment of the terms 'sanctifying grace' and 'supernatural life' in Gyn/Ecology as synonyms for the 'fatherly fixes' that inflate male egos and deflate female egos.Gyn/Ecology p.53.
91 Ibid., p.1.
92 Beyond God the Father chapters 5 and 6.

becoming of women;[93] in Gyn/Ecology, Pure Lust, the Wickedary and Outercourse she goes part way to providing women with such a narrative re-working. It is a method that originates from Daly's belief that the tendency continuallyto react against Christianity merely commits women to continue thinking and working within already existent and oppressive paradigms. She is more interested in looking to reconstruct present perception so that the 'old' values cease to be plausible or intelligible.[94] In order to emancipate themselves from the patriarchal reality conveyed through phallocracy women must therefore try to develop their own 'Original' female symbolics - symbol systems that convey 'biophilic' rather than 'necrophilic' values.

By the standards of traditional Christian theology Daly's attempts at theological construction appear to be 'heretical'. Ostensibly Daly flouts the discursive 'rules' governing traditional theological discourse: for example, by flirting with a non-monotheistic understanding of divinity in the use of the metaphor 'Powers of Be-ing' by labelling her work as a form of 'Nag Gnostic pantheism',[95] and by reversing the usual 'order of being' so that Christ comes to signify the power of demonic possession whereas the 'principalities and powers' become the messengers of the divine 'Goddess'.

However, such a description is not entirely accurate. As Rosemary Radford Ruether notes of Daly's work:

> The basic categories of Christian theology continue to operate in unconscious ways. One continues to find the basic paradigm of classical theology which connects an original good human nature, united to the cosmos and the divine, contrasted with an alienated, fallen, historical condition of humanity (sin, evil). Revelatory, transformative experiences (conversion) disclose the original humanity and allow one to liberate oneself from the sinful distortion of existence. This new humanity is then related to a redemptive community that gathers together and announces a prophetic, critical, or transformative mission against sinful society.[96]

Certainly the theological grammar of creation-fall-redemption is clearly discernible as is the importance of idolatry as a fundamental rule of theological grammar in Daly's writings. In surrendering her Christian allegiances she does not withdraw from a theistic view into paganism (as has for example Christ) or into any kind of dualism in which God is seen to interact with some other pre-existent material or principle or opposing power. For this would

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93 'The Spiritual Dimension of Women's Liberation' in A Reader in Feminist Knowledge Sneja Gunew (ed.) (London: Routledge, 1991) p.339. Originally published in Radical feminism (Quadrangle Press, 1973).
94 Beyond God the Father p.19
95 Pure Lust p.400
96 Ruether Sexism and God-Talk p.38.

make God less than ultimate, less than God. Daly seeks to combat the urge towards idolatry in this sense by 'de-reifying' God, that is, 'changing the conception/perception of god from "the supreme being" to Be-ing',[97] the dynamic Verb who cannot, without gross error, be conceived as a noun or object in the world. The concept of God remains the crucible of her theology - the ultimate, transcendent reality that explicates the coherence and 'implicate order' of process, an order which bestows purpose and meaning to the life of the cosmos and to human beings. As creator God is the sole ultimate source of all that exists or that has being. To speak of God as creator is not to isolate one attribute among many that God possesses, nor is it to point to one activity among others that God engages in. It is simply another way of speaking about God's ongoing and intimate relation to the world, a relation traditionally articulated in terms of the doctrine of God's 'preservation' of the world.

Daly frequently invokes the Goddess in her many forms.[98] Though she draws from some of the ancient myths surrounding the Goddess she does not look to these sources to legitimate radical feminism as the source and norm of truth. Neither does move over to the Goddess in the way that one might have thought and in the way that others (e.g. Christ) have done. For example, she has not wanted to resurrect a forgotten matriarchy, building upon the work of writers such as Bachofen, Briffault and Jane Harrison. Moreover, the theological option for the Goddess poses its own problems not least what Daly calls the 'massively passifizing effects of the ...New Age style "Goddess Spirituality"'.[99] In Daly's writings the Goddess is in fact the multi-faceted metaphor for women's connection with the 'Power of Be-ing'. In other words, the underlying concept of God has remained essentially unchanged. Thus she states that the Goddess is not to be understood as a mere female substitute for the male father-god for: 'Be-ing, the Verb, cannot without gross falsification be reified into a noun, whether that noun be identified as "Supreme Being" or "God" or "Goddess"'.[100] Rather does the image of the Goddess 'point metaphorically to the Powers of Be-ing, the Active Verb in whose potency all biophilic reality participates'.[101] Behind Daly's flamboyant language, then, there lies a concept of God that derives from a tradition of Christian theism - infinite and

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97 Beyond God the Father p.xvii

98 For many feminists today the symbol of the Goddess has come to symbolises the emergent power of women: including a celebration of the female body and will, women's bonding and heritage (in mother-daughter genealogies e.g. Demeter and Persephone), and an recognition of our human roots in nature - all of which have been consistently denied throughout the course of the Western religious and philosophical tradition. Writers such as Carol P. Christ, Z. Budapest, Naomi Goldenberg, Starhawk and Merlin Stone have pressed hard for the historical and theological recognition of the Goddess. Whether the feminist claims advanced for this religion are warranted, however, is yet to be seen.

99 'New Intergalactic Introduction'Gyn/Ecology p.xviii.

100 Pure Lust p.26.

absolute (because only an infinite God can be a metaphysically adequate ground and explanation of the world's being and also religiously adequate), incorporeal (because body is inherently limited and finite), omnipotent, and omniscient (because there is nothing 'outside' God to limit God's power and knowing). This conception of God is still present in the background of Daly's theology; itremains unaffected by her criticism which is focused upon the symbols rather than the fundamental philosophical concept of God.

There is, clearly, no easy theological escape from the 'reign of the Father'. Undoubtedly for women turning from the restrictive inheritance of Christianity the quest for new theological beginnings may involve a period of darkness and silence as we traverse 'a desert of the spirit created by the loss of accustomed symbols'.[102] New symbols and images through which to sustain a relationship to God will not spring up immediately. Daly project of 'sounding out' symbols, testing them to see if they resonate with women's collective experiences of feminism, is helpful.

In her analysis of the revolutionary feminists Anne Carr focuses attention upon the idea that symbols can be 'generated at will'.[103] She claims that this idea is in evidence in the writings of Christ and Goldenberg. Whether this is true of Christ and Goldenberg is not addressed here. It is clear that Daly does not advocate such a facile understanding of symbol generation.. For Daly: 'The becoming of new symbols is not a matter that can be decided arbitrarily around a conference table. Rather, symbols grow out of a changing communal situation and experience'.[104] It is thus not Daly herself, nor any other individual or group, who can formulate symbols to replace the dead and dying Christian symbols of Christianity. It is rather the new communal situation, one that is for Daly marked decisively by the rising collective consciousness of women, that Daly believes may yield new religious symbols. Carr is thus not justified in attempting to convey the impression that *all* the revolutionaries proceed on a simplistic understanding of the way in which symbols are generated.

In the foregoing argument I have not sought to infer that Daly remains somehow a covert or 'unconscious' Christian. That she has moved beyond the parameters of Christian theology is clear upon reflection of three basic facts about Daly's theology. Firstly, the fundamental idea of 'God' she works with is not Trinitarian; secondly, it is not 'personal' in any traditional sense ('God' is not seen as a 'person' with whom we may communicate); and finally, knowledge of 'God' is attained not from the historical revelation through Jesus Christ, but from a quasi-phenomenological meditation upon the 'intuition of being'. These reasons alone would seem to disqualify Daly from inclusion under the

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101 Ibid.

102 'Impasse and Dark Night' in Living with Apocalypse: Spiritual Resources for Social Compassion ed. Tilden Edwards (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1984) pp. 95-116.

103 Carr, Anne Transforming Grace p.90

104 Beyond God the Father p.15.

rubric 'Christian'. It is rather that her departure from Christianity did not therefore signal the closure of her discursive relationship with the tradition. When we come to consider the relationship of Daly's 'elemental feminist' discourse to Christian discourse, we discover something important about Daly and her approach that she herself does not fully recognise. As I have shown she continues to operate in some way in continuity and conversation with Christian theological thought-forms even after the rupture with Christianity, and in spite of the disclaimers that her work is discontinuous with the discipline of theology as it now stands. This should not be too surprising. It is highly improbable that Daly (or any woman whose theological sensibilities have been formed within the trajectory of Christianity) could 'leap' outside the very thought forms through which she came to think theologically in the first place. A wholesale attack upon 'tradition' is philosophical folly and leads to intellectual impoverishment. As Carr notes (following Hans Georg Gadamer): 'All real understanding (truth as event) is in fact new understanding as it occurs in the dialogue with tradition. Thus tradition is conceived as a living address and responsive source for questioning and reinterpretation, and it is only within this conversation that tradition itself is understood'.[105] One cannot escape from one's cultural matrix; indeed one might well dispute the wisdom of even trying. It is important then that we realise that Daly (or any one else for that matter) cannot function in a theological vacuum. We must be aware of the fact that the parameters and rubrics of the theological context in which she operates are set by Christianity. The theological context remains determinably 'Christian' in the sense that she cannot orient herself to some 'other' context because there is none

I turn now to my third task which is to consider the implications of the continuing impact of Western theism upon Daly's feminist theology for the division of labour between 'reformist' and 'revolutionary' feminists theologians.If Daly'sfeminist criticism of Christianity is valid, the task of attempting to establish a new vector of theological possibilities - the so-called 'revolutionary path - has now become imperative for feminists. Some may see such an imperative to signal the death of theology in the form that it has traditionally taken. Such women may want to explore what Sallie McFague calls 'a variety of reflective forms other than constructive theology'.[106] Given the widespread disillusionment with traditional theological discourse some may conclude, with McFague, that there is 'an improper primacy of theological reflection over other forms'.[107] These individuals may turn to religious forms from other continents; others may seek to create their own

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105 Carr Transforming Grace p.283.

106 McFague, Sallie Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language (London: SCM Press, 1983) p.ix. C.f.: McFague Speaking in Parables: a Study in Metaphor in Theology (London: SCM Press, 1983).

107 McFague Metaphorical Theology p.ix.

forms and expression. Thus have New Age-style spiritualities, Goddess rituals, story-telling and parabolic theology taken root within western feminist spirituality.

Whilst it may indeed be laudatory that alternative forms of religious-theological expression other than formal theology be explored and utilised, the question of how a constructive feminist theology may be formulated remains. Like every other intellectual form exploited in patriarchy, theology cannot be ignored, nor should it be simply rejected. It must be trans-formed. If women are to begin to address the gender imbalance that currently persists inside the various sub-disciplines of theology (fundamental, practical and systematic) we must seek to bring about radical structural change in the way theology is practised. For only then will the discipline be capable of embodying and reflecting the experiences of contemporary women in the complexity of our diverse religious contexts. Such a project cannot be left to men; it seems unlikely that male theologians will effect the methodological modifications in their work necessary to the emergence of sex-inclusive theologies. And, in fact, considerable indifference towards feminist efforts to demystify theology and religion still persists in the British context. Nor is it simply a case of more women being admitted into theological faculties, as both students and teachers (though that is undoubtedly part of what is necessary). The mere increment of the numbers of females participating in theology does not, of itself guarantee the transformation of the subject. Women, no less than men, embody and enact the dynamics of the hierarchical dualism that lies at the root of the phallocratic economy. A significant permutation in the processes by which theological creativity seems most likely to occur, therefore, if, and only if, feminist theologians succeed in practising theology in a way that challenges and unmasks the phallocratic nature of theological knowledge-generation.

That the questions raised by Daly require clarification and response from each and every feminist theologian becomes evident when we consider the two elements of feminist theological identity. Firstly, the feminist theologian qua feminist must exercise her critical judgement as to the potential of Christianity to either facilitate or hinder feminist women in their struggles to transform present social values, relations and structures. In other words she must adopt some perspective or other on Christianity in working toward the transformation of the underlying values of culture and society. For simply to ignore the impact of Christianity as a social phenomenon would be clearly theoretically inadequate. One may thus suppose that, given the historical potency of Christian forms, the feminist theologian is bound to take the symbolic matrix of Christianity into account as part of theoretical analysis of society. Women are culturally (even if not religiously) impacted by biblical traditions; for we are historical beings. Indeed one could argue that the history of western society is tied indelibly to the history of Christianity. The transformation of western culture and society, on this view, are unlikely to occur without a corresponding permutation of that spiritual ethos and worldview in which that society is 'rooted', in other words, Christianity. Secondly, the

feminist theologian qua theologian must address the question of her relationship to Christianity on an existential level. She must, in other words, come to a decision as to whether Christianity is an adequate and appropriate medium through which she, and other women, may sustain a religious relationship to 'ultimate reality' or 'God'. This decision is prompted precisely by the feminist critique of Christianity. The impact of the question upon Christian feminists is potentially explosive. As Marjorie Suchoki acknowledges: 'We [Christian feminists] do not raise the question; we are the question. To resolve the issues presented by Daly is therefore of intense importance to us; who we are, and who we can and will become, hangs in the balance'.[108] This decision, vis-a-vis the compatibility between feminism and Christianity, logically precedes any discussion of feminist theological method and practice. Indeed, the decision may influence, to a considerable degree, the nature of the methodological constraints in operation in the theological discourse of a particular theologian.[109]

What is at stake here is what is to count as 'theology'. Daly's theological challenge to Christianity renders problematic the discipline of theology as it now stands. For in so far as the history of Christian theology has been an extended commentary on a revealed religion which is thoroughly patriarchal, any attack upon Christian religious ideals constitutes a challenge to the very heart of theology itself, its norms, values and categories, as well as to the social privileges Christian theologians enjoy. This is a question which Christian feminists do not, on the whole, consider.

The nature of the discipline of theology in western culture has been determined historically by the dynamics of Christian thought. The discourse of Christianity continues to hold an unrivalled hegemony in the religious and theological institutions of Western culture. Theological space in the Western academy continues to be legitimated by the long-standing association of the discipline with the notion of a 'Christian' society and culture. It is still Christianity - rather than any other major institutionalised religions (such as Islam, Judaism), or any other mode of non-institutionalised spirituality (such as Goddess spirituality and Wicca) - that continues to provide the discipline of theology with its 'obligatory rubrics' (Roland Barthes), its fundamental criteria and methodological parameters. Thus, for a particular theology to be legitimated by the institutions whose function it is to generate and formalise theological knowledge, it must be faithful to the formal constraints attending Christian theological reflection - it must be monotheistic, formulate itself according to the

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108 Suchoki op. cit., p. 307.

109 One might cite as a case in point Daphne Hampson's 'post-Christian' theology. In Hampson's thought the base conviction that Christianity is 'impossible' (a belief consequent upon the inadmissibility of any notion of a 'unique' revelation of God) rules out of court any theological approach predicated upon this assumption and makes an empirically based approach necessary. See Theology and Feminism (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

grammar of creation-fall-redemption and, most importantly of all, it must orient itself around the central event of Christian believing - the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ.

Indeed the history of theology is viewed in certain theological circles as 'a branch of Church history',[110] with its beginnings in the apostolic community out of which the 'first and permanently normative reflection on the original experience of Jesus of Nazareth' emerged.[111] The German Protestant theologian Paul Tillich argues that the claim for Christian hegemony over the generation of theological knowledge in western culture is ultimately founded upon 'the Christian doctrine that the Logos became flesh, that the principle of divine self-revelation has become manifest in the event "Jesus as the Christ"'.[112] Tillich goes on to argue that: 'If this message is true, Christian theology has received a foundation which transcends the foundation of any other theology and which itself cannot be transcended'.[113] Tillich - like other Christian theologians - believes the kerygma about Jesus to be true; he is therefore convinced that Christian theology possesses a substructure that is unique and unsurpassable.

But it is precisely the question of the truth of the exclusive claims for Jesus' divine status that Daly's critique problematises. Indeed, Daly has not only cast suspicion upon Jesus' divinity - arguing that he is soteriologically impotent for women - but upon the relevance for women of all the other core symbols of the tradition. Reflecting critically upon the social structures of authority and domination Daly has put into question both the nature of the religious language that we employ with regard to 'God', and the prevailing concept of our discipline 'theology'. She has shown that the history of Christian thought is shot through with androcentric assumptions. She has argued that the symbolisation of God, in western theological discourse has, almost exclusively, been the product and the preserve of men. She has further argued that the symbolisation of divinity in exclusively masculine terms has legitimated the domination of women by men. On the basis of such claims she argues that male or masculinist theologians have, in universalising from the experience of a privileged minority (socially advantaged males) to the detriment of other social groups (most strikingly women), given a false account of the 'human' understanding of God and, in so doing, have brought the discipline of Christian theology into intellectual disrepute. In this respect Daly's critique represents a tear in the fabric of the text of the western theological tradition.

What then are the implications of Daly's criticism of Christianity and her abiding *non-Christian* dependence upon the fundamentals of Western theism? Firstly, her criticism of Christian symbols allows us to see that the prevalent discourse in theology has delimited the area of study to

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110 Sacramentum Mundi 'Theology II' p.240.
111 Ibid., p.241.
112 Tillich Systematic Theology Volume I p.16.

(male) Christian theology thereby marginalizing both female contributions to Christian theological history as well as other non-Christian theological approaches. Many women are now beginning to question both the object of theological study as this has been traditionally conceived ('God') and the prevailing concept of 'theology'. (In this respect feminist theology has moved in parallel with the developments in feminist literary studies and the humanities and social sciences).[114] Clearly the emergence of feminism into the public arena presents a bold challenge to patriarchal culture in toto. The sound of women's voices, breaking the silence of the ages, implies a radical re-evaluation not just of history itself but of philosophy, ethics, politics, economics, art and religion - in short of all the cultural vehicles of human self-expression. As I hope to have illustrated throughout this thesis this is a project to which Daly is committed. With respect to the discipline of theology it may well be that the use of the term 'theology' by Christian thinkers to delimit the field of legitimate theological reflection to Christianity alone is contestable. For the relation between 'Christianity' and 'western theological discourse' is not one of simple identity. The first use of the term 'theology' by a Christian occurs in the writings of Origen (d.254), though it was not until the work of Eusebius of Caesarea, in the fourth century, that the term came to be used to refer exclusively to Christian revelation. 'Theology' itself has a complex semantic history, deriving etymologically from the coalescence of two Greek terms, '*theos* ' or 'God', and *lògos* ' or 'word/meaning'. The term literally means 'speech' or 'discourse' concerning that which is called 'God'. It does not have a Christian provenance; *theologia* was originally used in pre-Christian times, by Plato in the Republic, for instance, to signify simply stories about the gods, and by Aristotle as a synonym for first philosophy or metaphysics.[115] With the development of Christianity that took place under the Greek Fathers, the word began to assume something like its present meaning, denoting meditations on the inner mysteries of God. But even among the scholastics Aquinas makes an important distinction, in his writings, between '*theologia* ' and '*sacra doctrina* ' which is defined as 'a schooling in what God has revealed, in addition to the philosophical researches pursued by human reasoning'.[116] *Theologia* directs its gaze towards the same object as *sacra doctrina* (God) but considers that object under a different aspect of knowing, looking at the highest principle 'in the light of natural reason' whilst *sacra doctrina* proceeds 'in the light of divine revelation'.[117] 'Consequently', writes Aquinas, 'the

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113 Ibid.
114 Macdonell, Diane Theories of Discourse: An Introduction (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993; first edition 1986) pp.4-7.
115 Aristotle Metaphysics 6.1025a
116 *Summa Theologiae* 1a,1,1.
117 Ibid., 1a, 1,1, ad. 2.

theology of holy teaching differs in kind from that theology which is ranked as a part of philosophy'.[118]

It may be that the relatively late development of the word 'theology' - to denote the application of the intellect to a systematically ordered corpus of revealed knowledge about God (a development that occurred until the scholastic period) - is a distortion. It is, I suggest, incumbent upon the feminist theologian to begin to explore critically the meaning and the implications of the phrases 'Christian tradition' and 'western theological tradition'. Certainly on the basis of my analysis of Daly's dealings with Christianity it would seem that some dstinction between western theological tradition and Christian theological tradition needs to be made.

If *theologia* can be wrested/rescued from the grip of androcentric Christianity we may at last begin to glimpse the possibility of a reconstruction of theology such that it comes to reflect and value the experiences of contemporary women. I am not suggesting that we treat theology as 'philosophy of religion'. But there seems to be no good reasons why any committed God-talk cannot be described as 'theology'. The three characteristics of theology have always been, first, the struggle to express in words our wonder at the deepest reality (God) which remains nameless and ultimately ineffable in its fullness; second, the framing of questions that have historically haunted human life (the existential 'facts' of death, change, of the human realities of psychic ruption, pain and evil) ha also been historically one of the most fundamental tasks of the theologian; and third, and perhaps, above all else, theology at its best has acted as a catalyst for the transformation of individuals. Moreover, if this is a reasonable (though possibly unorthodox) reading of what theology has historically amounted to, one does not, I think, need to stand within an institutional religious context to engage in the practice of theology, though the advantages of having centuries of commentary upon spiritual questions at one's disposal are obvious. Just as viable, and perhaps more palatable than institutional religions, like Christianity, to many people in the Western world today, is the option to recognise and honour insights into the nature of human existence and reality from whatever source they derive. Such an unashamed eclecticism may mean scavenging from the ideological store-houses of many diverse religious and philosophical traditions (or even from secularity for that matter).

The other major point I wish to make is that Daly's practice problematises the dichotomy between theological reformists and revolutionaries. There is still no consensus of agreement amongst feminist theologians as to whether to abandon Christianity or to pour energy into the movement for the reform of Christian ecclesiastical and theological structures. The debate, now over twenty years old, rumbles on. On Daly's account the feminist theologian can no longer simply

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118 Ibid. This is not to say that *theologia* comes into conflict with *sacra doctrina*.

accept the disciplinary prescription to work 'within tradition', for 'tradition' itself is rendered suspect. The work carried out by other noted 'revolutionaries' has since echoed Daly's conclusion that the exclusively male symbolism of Christianity should be left behind because the images it conveys are intrinsically patriarchal. I refer, notably, to the work of Carol P. Christ, Naomi Goldenberg and Daphne Hampson.[119] It should be recognised that breaking free from the stranglehold of Christian Scripture and tradition has been a very positive move for many feminist women to make. Clearly the images thrown up from the symbols of a male saviour and a father god are, for many women, fundamentally inadequate in dealing with the inner fragmentation they experience as a result of their oppressed status in a patriarchal society. Abandoning such symbols is often the first step towards psychic integration and moral autonomy in its broadest sense. Thus, for Carol P. Christ movement out of Christianity and into Goddess religion awakened her dormant sense of her own female power, power which had been suppressed in her association with Christianity.

Christian feminist responses to Daly's critique have been varied, reflecting the heterogeneity of the Christian feminist phenomenon. Christian feminists operate from a variety of Christological and soteriological positions and adopt a variety of arguments to support their call for reform. Some Christian feminists continue to practice 'Christian' theology perceiving no necessity to depart from the traditional understanding of sin and salvation in personal terms.[120] Such women do not consider Jesus' maleness[121] or the 'finality' of the revelation given through Christ as in any way problematic.[122] Yet many contemporary Christian feminist theologies arise directly from women's experiences of racism,[123] imperialism[124] and heterosexism.[125] Such diversity issues us with a

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119 All of these thinkers stand in the same tradition of 'dissent' as Daly. Whilst they all critique the symbolic network at the heart of Christianity, however, the shape and depth of their respective criticisms are quite different - as are their theological backgrounds, interests and spiritualities. Christ is primarily interested in Goddess religion, though also in more modern stories and myths: see Christ Diving Deep and Rising: Women Writers on the Spiritual Quest (Boston: Beacon, 1980); Goldenberg works in the field of comparative religion, analysing dreams, myth and symbols: see Changing of the Gods: Feminism and the End of Traditional Religions (Boston: Beacon, 1979); Hampson, though working from a post-Christian feminist perspective, is perhaps the most traditionally systematic of all the 'revolutionaries', though her interests are turning increasingly towards modern continental philosophy, including French feminisms: see Theology and Feminism and After Christianity (London: SCM Press, 1996).

120 E.g. Virginia Ramsey Mollenkott Women, Men and the Bible (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1977) pp104-105. (check)

121 Mollenkott, op. cit., p.47; Patricia Wilson-Kastner Faith, Feminism and the Christ (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983) p.115.

122 E.g.Wilson-Kastner, op. cit., p.110.

123 See for example Katie Geneva Cannon *et al* (The Mudflower Collective) God's Fierce Whimsy: Christian Feminism and Theological Education (N.Y.: Pilgrim Press, 1985).

124 See for example Gloria Anzaldua 'Entering into the Serpent' in Judith Plaskow and Carol P. Christ (eds.) Weaving the Visions: New Patterns in Feminist Spirituality (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1989) pp. 77-86.

reminder that any typology tends to throw up a picture which indubitably homogenises empirically complex realities, and thus that the attempt to capture the host of variable historical, theological, ontological and anthropological claims evoked by the term 'Christian feminism' in a single model may tend towards a kind of empirical erasure.

Doubtless the future of Christianity, as a patriarchal creation, is uncertain. It has been mooted, for example, that there is no absolute guarantee that feminist reconstructions of Christian symbols will continue to foster oppression. A certain leap of faith is involved here, for Daly and the other revolutionaries cannot be sure that radically reconstructed Christian symbols will continue to legitimate a patriarchal culture. It may equally be the case that to shrink from involvement in the slow, messy business of transforming a tradition which continues to influence the cultural values of Western society is ultimately more dangerous than the ever-present risk of assimilation.

Yet it remains the case that the Christian traition is (as one Christian commentator concedes) at the very best 'fundamentally ambiguous for women.'[126] I believe, however, that for the full effects of Daly's challenge to the discipline of theology to be realised would require that more (Christian) women open their Selves up to the possibility that their tradition cannot be 're-formed' through cosmetic change. It would require that they subject their Selves, their spiritual-political allegiances and professional affiliations to the most probing of examinations. Whether they choose to take up this challenge, in its deepest dimensions, remains as yet to be seen.

This said, the utility of the distinction between reformists and revolutionaries tends to gloss over the complexities of feminist theological experiences and identities. The dichotomy of feminist theological labour between reformists and revolutionaries has sometimes resulted not only in critical disagreements (which are inevitable and, insofar as they contribute positively to public theological debate, healthy), but in an intellectualised form of horizontal violence.[127] It could be argued that the ongoing 'war' between the two 'factions' may be destructive of feminist community insofar as it inevitably draws feminist energy and attention away from the real 'enemy', namely, the political matrix of domination-submission and the role masculinist theology continues to play in its perpetuation. Thus the critical accuracy of this conceptual dichotomy in religious scholarship (a dichotomy which Daly's later, more extreme anti-Christian rhetoric exacerbates) breaks down in the face of the common struggle of religious feminists to transform theo-logia itself.

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125 See for example Carter Heyward Speaking of Christ: A Lesbian Feminist Voice ed. Ellen C. Davis (N.Y,: Pilgrim Press, 1989).

126 Loades, Ann Feminist Theology: A Reader (London: SPCK, 1990) p.4.

127 Examples of the acrimonious conflict between the two faction are: the debate between Ruether and the Goddess people in the journal Womanspirit; Fiorenza's hostility to 'post-biblical feminists'; and Daly's later unhelpful extremist rhetoric about Christianity - rhetoric which often meet with equally violent counter-polemics.

Daly too is looking for a usable theological past. One should not be surprised by this fact . Nor should the revelation of Daly's continued dependence upon the body of Christian discourse be an occasion, on the part of Christian feminists, to gloat. A recognition of our socio-cultural embeddedness does not necessarily imply a commitment to 'reformist' agendas. It merely implies that women must work with what has been given to them, if only to look for ways to subvert their cultural forms in order to divest them of their power to oppress. That western culture is 'rooted' spiritually in the matrix of the Judaeo-Christian theism is incontrovertible.

I wish to suggest that Daly's continued dependence upon the fundamental tenets of western theism need not be construed as a limitation. On the contrary; as she writes: to be ' in the situation of hearing ... these contradictory messages' of a life-affirming and a life-negating nature is 'to live in conflict, refusing the simplistic formulas not only of those who are completely 'inside' but also of those who are 'outside'.[128] Daly's position then is situated on the boundary of 'acceptable' theological discourse. The boundary is defined as 'the location of new space/time - [and] is understood primarily in a psychic sense of woman identified integrity, [though] this is closely associated with the claiming of physical space/time by and for women. Such space/time is "on the boundary of all that has been considered central"'.[129] The boundary represents the centre of the 'new time/space' that is imperative for women 'to become who we are, in which there are real and significant alternatives to the prefabricated identities provided within the enclosed spaces of patriarchal institutions. As opposed to the foreclosed identity allotted to us within those spaces, there is a diffused identity - an open road to discovery of the self and of each other'.[130] The 'boundary' position represents a critical site from which to challenge the androcentrism of Christian theology and yet also to begin to weave new non-androcentric theologies within the western tradition. The term expresses the fact that one's work is the product of a quite specific culture and theological situation, and this setting requires recognition in so far as it continues to colour analysis and creativity. There may be nothing intrinsically important about the label itself, it may be provisional. It does, however, allow a point of contact and critique with the dominant form of theology, that is, male and Christian (one might also add white and 'middle class'). This is not to say that Daly remains in any way 'Christian'. The interpretation of Daly's theological practice that I propose here is more subtle: I submit that there exists, if you will, a certain kinship between Daly's thought and Christianity. It is to say that she remains in essence a theist in the western tradition of theology. There are always parameters in which her separatism operates. These parameters involve elements from medieval and modern (Christian Catholic) theology and elements from the Western tradition of (male) philosophy.

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128 'The Women's Movement: An Exodus Community' p.327.
129 Beyond God the Father 'Original Reintroduction' p.xx; c.f.: p.40-41.

A recognition of Daly's theological existence on the boundary of the Western traditionhas repercussions for feminist theologians' perception of their work in relation to one another. For it makes what Carr calls 'the attempt to frame a more inclusive construction of Western theology that is sensitive to the experience of women'[131] an urgent task. I have noted and used Christ's division of theological labour between reformists and revolutionaries. But are the options open to the feminist theologian correctly represented in this simplistic binary fashion? If the above account is accurate then a new model of feminist theological resistance is required. In this respect, Carr continues, 'Christ's distinctions between reformist and revolutionary approaches ... should not be allowed to divide women's religious scholarship and search. Each position has strengths that are important to the ongoing debate'.[132] It may be that, insofar as mainstream theology continues to resist a radical self-questioning of its basic organisational categories and methodology, feminist theology serves its own interests best by maintaining a critical position on the *edge* or on the *boundary* of the discipline (as Daly characterises it) - at least in those places wherein theology enjoys the privileges bestowed by virtue of institutionalised status. In place of the conventional division Carr glimpses a 'sisterhood of all women who share the concerns of religious feminism'.[133] Indeed, she perceives the women's movement 'in the synagogue, the Christian Church, and the feminist spirituality movement' to have 'already developed into a tradition that is ecumenical, pluralist, and academically serious'.[134] Jews, Christians and those others who, like Daly, now claim an allegiance to neither tradition share the base conviction 'that both feminism and religion are profoundly significant for the lives of women and for contemporary life generally'.[135] Such an aspiration is, I believe, faithful to the insights of the early Daly. Clearly the question of women's allegiance to patriarchal structures (such as Christianity) is fraught with ambiguity . Whilst clearly wanting to exhort women to break out of Christianity, Daly recognises that the timing and the form of women's movement into the space(s) of liberation are 'complex' questions that can only be decided by individual women in their integrity. She never returned to the Church after the 'Exodus sermon' in the autumn of 1971. But she clearly understood the decision of those who chose to stay inside institutional religion. Remaining part of Christianity, she writes: 'is based upon the conviction that there are important values transmitted through these institutions that make it worth the pain and effort of staying in and fighting the system

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130 Ibid., p.40.
131 Carr Transforming Grace p.89.
132 Ibid., n.6, p.221.
133 Heyward 'Speaking, Sparking, Building and Burning: Ruether and Daly, Theologians' p.95.
134 Carr Transforming Grace p. 95
135 Ibid.

... These are personal choices and no one can set down hard-and-fast rules for everyone to follow.'[136]

Women leaving Christianity act, Daly observes, from 'very individual reasons'.[137] I think this recognition is important in as much as it helps to counter a mistaken, though widespread perception about her (negative) attitude towards women who make different choices to herself. To condemn those women who, for various reasons, continue to identify Christianity as a site for feminist struggle is therefore divisive and insensitive to the positive, liberatory experiences many women continue to enjoy as active members of particular Christian denominations. The dilemma she depicts between remaining within a sexist tradition and leaving that tradition to search for spiritual resources drawn from women's community, history and myths - a dilemma which, in her early work, she embodies - is an ongoing, often painful reality in the lives of many women.

Whether a serious dialogue will materialise is another question. The prognosis is not good. Both sides appear to be dug in behind their defences. Daly's explicit goals have little to do, moreover, with providing resources for any kind of academic feminist theology. Indeed there is evidence to suggest that she remains suspicious of theology *per se*. She describes her own work now not under the rubric of theology but as 'Elemental Feminist Philosophy' (though as I have suggested, one could argue that her work orients itself naturally towards a theological horizon). She continues to set up Christianity as purely a symbolic conduit for misogyny and Christian feminism as at best futile and at worst dangerous.

In conclusion: contemporary feminist theology stands in need of a space that empowers women critically to renegotiate their theological identities whilst yet, at the same time, recognising our 'rootedness' in the soil of the western theological tradition. In other words we need an alternative both to the reformism proposed by Christian feminists, and also to the conviction that we can step outside the Christian cultural and theological inheritance at will. Such an alternative is, I argue, discernible in Daly's writing. Daly's approach focuses upon the religious analysis of consciousness-raising. But she continues to rely upon a religious framework that is the product of the Western theological tradition. In so doing she is intervening in order actively to shape that tradition, resisting the limitations imposed by Christianity, pushing back the parameters. As I have shown, the theological space inhabited by Daly is located neither 'inside' Christianity nor 'outside' the western theological tradition., but on the boundary between Christianity and a world of new theological possibilities. It represents a critical site from which to challenge the androcentrism of Christian theology and yet also to begin to weave new non-androcentric theologies within the western tradition. The last phrase is crucial; one of the principle merits of Daly's postchristian position is

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136 'The Spiritual Dimension of Women's Liberation' pp.335.
137 'The Women's Community' p.333.

that it does not signify a wholesale critical 'destruction' of the western tradition, but rather its preservation through radical change. Daly's revolutionary feminist 'moment' is characterised by theologically-informed 'critical reflectivity', that is, an exercise in which she analyses the Christian cultural context and its effects as part of the ongoing process of self-examination and the construal of present and future identity. This is achieved as a result of a dialectical movement. Daly's position is both constructed out of elements inherent in the western tradition and yet also capable of re-acting or acting back upon it so as to continually transform the tradition. This in turn illuminates the potential for constructive relations between 'revolutionary' feminist theologians, Christianity and the broader Western theistic tradition: relations that transcends the usual revolutionary-reformist dichotomy in feminist theological scholarship.

CONCLUSION

It is hoped that bringing Daly's creative interaction with the various discourses to critical light has helped to illustrate that Daly's feminist practice is about ongoing engagement, evaluation, critique and recovery of Western intellectual forms rather than a simple policy of rejection in the name of some (illusory) ideal of feminist 'purity'. In this respect the extended metaphor of web-text-tapestry is a particularly important expression of Daly's conception of the creative processes at work in the consciousness raising process.[1] In the Wickedary the meaning of web is given as:

> [A] fabric as it is being woven on a loom or as it appears when removed from a loom (a web of lace)'. Thus the word Web can convey that this work is not completed/finished - that it is always in process. (Clearly, our Elemental association with spiders is also implied). At the same Time, there is a certain sense of completion, and therefore the word Tapestry also applies.[2]

But spinning is only possible because a woman has pre-existing 'material' and 'threads' that she can draw upon.

Moira Gatens reading of Daly as a theoretical separatist is, I think, somewhat misleading. True, Daly is not interested in the transformation of any of the four male-stream theoretical frameworks of Thomism, existentialism, sociology or Christianity. In this respect she could be labelled a theoretical separatist. But such a phrase is inadequate in as much as it tends to trivialise the often complex nature of Daly's relationship with these theories. To begin with it is hardly the case that Daly sees philosophy, like Solanas, as 'necessarily' masculinist, for she considers philosophy (albeit rather unconventional 'Elemental Feminist Philosophy') to play an important part in her own intellectual vocation. She may be seen to stand in line with other more 'liberal' feminist theologians in that, whilst she holds that knowledge, theory and reason have historically been biased against women, they have nevertheless not been intrinsically 'masculine' modes. Daly nowhere advocates leaving the western institutions of rational discourse alone; neither does she (as Cixous, Kristeva and Irigaray) try to 'speak the feminine'. Unlike Solanas, she acknowledges the necessity for a feminist policy of selective appropriation from traditional male-stream theory. 'Amazon expeditions into the male-controlled "fields" are necessary', she believes, 'in order to leave the

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1 C.f.: Daly's recitation of the story of Mehetabel in Pure Lust pp. 305ff.

2 The Wickedary p. xvii-xviii; c.f. Gyn/Ecology pp. 22-23.

father's caves and live in the sun'.[3] They are necessary because male-authored texts 'are conduits to the knowledge that has been controlled and contaminated within tombs/tomes of sado-schooling. In fact, vigorous, independent creativity commands the use of such re-source materials'.[4] Thus, whilst Daly does sometimes reject the work of her intellectual forbears outright, it is more often the case that she manifests some measure of agreement with them - even if she only mentions them fleetingly. As we witnessed in chapter four, one of the cornerstones of Daly's theory is the presupposition that knowledge and power are contingent upon each other. Hence, feminist political struggle must include the retrieval of knowledge from those who use it in order to oppress rather than to liberate.

This practice is articulated, in Daly's writings, in terms of the metaphor of intellectual piracy: the feminist must be a 'Crafty Pirate' who 'Righteously Plunder[s] treasures of knowledge that have been stolen and hidden from women, and ... struggl[es] to Smuggle these back in such a way that they can be seen as distinct from their mindbinding trappings'.[5] The aim of the feminist Pirate is to ransack the 'Treasures' - the methods, concepts and categories - of Western thought in an effort to find elements worthy of appropriation. Daly not only considers her work under the metaphor of 'piracy' but also under that of 'alchemy', the science of turning base metal into gold. She writes that after 'Plundering' gems from the 'Treasure Trove' of western intellectual history :

> I quickly settled down to work in my Cove and Conjured my Alchemical Craft. With this Craft I transformed the damaged but partially genuine gems of insight that I had acquired in my High Sea adventures. The secret of my Alchemical powers lay in my ability to Dis-cover and create an entirely Other setting for these treasures, that is, Radical Feminist Philosophy.[6]

It is true that Daly's refuses to draw from male-stream traditions in any*systematic* or wholesale way. She urges women to avoid the temptation to fit their experience into 'theories that might appear tempting as prefabricated molds'.[7] Instead of trying to insert ourselves into ready-made constructs, women are exhorted to listen to the dynamics inherent in their own and other women's experiences and 'to speak these dynamics in our own lives and words'.[8] This need not mean that *only* women's experience is admissible or valid as a source for feminist theology. Rather does it mean that many of the criteria by which male-stream theories are to be assessed arise out of women's experience. The

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3 Gyn/Ecology p.8.
4 Pure Lust p.115.
5 Gyn/Ecology p.xxvi.
6 Outercourse p.157.
7 Beyond God the Father p.37.
8 Ibid.

crucial feminist problem is then not *whether* feminists should attempt to reclaim resources from male-stream theory, but rather 'how to re-possess righteously while avoiding being caught too long in the caves'.[9]

By contrast to proponents of the additive approach, which considers theoretical paradigms to be basically sex-neutral, Daly frequently draws attention to the problems and dangers that attend feminist expeditions into male-stream culture. She writes:

> In universities, and in all of the professions, the omnipresent poisonous gases gradually stifle women's minds and spirits. Those who carry out the necessary expeditions run the risk of shrinking into the mold of the mystified Athena, the twice-born, who forgets and denies her Mother and Sisters, because she has forgotten her original Self. 'Re-born' from Zeus, she becomes Daddy's Girl, the mutant who serves the master's purposes.[10]

Daly's fear is that, in the attempt to 're-possess' male-authored discourses, feminists may fall into the equivalent of what one critic has aptly termed 'homologation', that is, inadvertent assimilation into very the masculine models of thought and practice (and consequently sets of values) that they are trying to escape from. (This is of course much the same point as is made by Gatens in her discussion of theoretical separatism). But the presence of this danger does not mean that Daly thinks feminist women should necessarily renounce male-authored theory altogether. Once one becomes aware of the potential dangers one is faced with a choice. Daly writes: "One either tries to avoid 'acceptable deviance' ('normal' female idiocy) by becoming accepted as a male-identified professional, or else one tries to make the qualitative leap towards self-acceptable deviance as ludic cerebrator, questioner of everything, madwoman and witch".[11] She exhorts women to follow the latter path: male-stream theory may be used, but only on the proviso that feminists question 'everything' and test the theory in order to discover the extent to which it will accommodate feminist reality. She maintains that it is only by making our own women's experience sovereign as a basis for theoretical construction that we are then able to be 'free to listen to the old philosophical language ... If some of this language, when heard in the context of female becoming, is still worth hearing, we need not close our ears. But if we choose to speak the same sounds they will be formally and existentially new words, for the new context constitutes them as such. Our process is *our* process'.[12] But male theory is of use only in a secondary sense and, even then, the meaning of its constructs is transformed by Daly's mode of application.

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9 Gyn/Ecology p.8.
10 Ibid.
11 The Church and the Second Sex pp. 50-51.
12 Beyond God the Father p.189.

Daly's view of male-stream theory is therefore more nuanced than Gatens acknowledges. Implicitly, what is suggested by Daly's practice with regard to traditional male-stream theology, philosophy, sociology and political theory is that, however critical we may be of their presuppositions and constructions, feminists cannot avoided some level of interaction with them. With the exception of a small minority of feminist women there is now, I think, widespread consensus on this matter. As Pateman comments: ' ... it is impossible completely to turn our backs on the classics or on contemporary methodology, because all modes of discourse reflect and are implicated in the past to a greater or lesser degree'.[13] We are all to some degree bound and limited by 'patriarchal' thought-forms; no 'pure' feminist discourse is possible.

Such a strategy would seem to be eminently reasonable. Feminists have come to mistrust a host of discourses and practices, ranging from medicine to theology to technology, that have been framed and formed by men, but that does not, and should not, prevent us from insisting that medicine respond to women's needs, from re-claiming spirituality and from exercising active responsibility for the proper direction of technology. Clearly feminist theoretical activity cannot be confined to those realms of experience and spheres of 'culture' that have been historically the provenance of women, for the list would be very short indeed .

Moreover he reclamation of what is of continuing value from the past is a critical task that is neglected at our greatest peril. The French writer and philosopher Simone Weil has emphasised the idea of the need for us to acknowledge and constantly reclaim our 'roots' in the historical past and in our cultural traditions. Roots exist, she argues, by virtue of our participation in a certain community, and its value structures. From these we draw moral, intellectual, emotional nourishment; our lives are given purpose. Weil writes:

> It would be useless to turn one's back on the past in order simply to concentrate on the future. It is a dangerous illusion to believe that such a thing is even possible. The opposition of future to past or past to future is absurd. The future brings us nothing, gives us nothing; it is we who in order to build it have to give it everything, our very life. But to be able to give, one has to possess; and we possess no other life, no other living sap, then the treasures stored up from the past and digested, assimilated and created afresh by us. Of all the human soul's needs, none is more vital than this one of the past.[14]

Weil discusses the concept of roots by reference to the socio-cultural conditions of spiritual life and the appreciation of value in the context of French history. But it is easy enough to see the implications of her basic insight for feminist methodology with regard to male-stream texts.

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13 Pateman and Gross, op. cit., p.3.

14 Weil The Need For Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties Towards Mankind (London and New York:

Ironically (in view of Daly's uncompromising rhetoric) one of the strengths of Daly's practice may well be a willingness to live and struggle with tensions, ambiguities and paradoxes with respect to our intellectual heritage. The fact that Daly seeks to challenge rather than ignore male-stream theory is implicitly supported by her own decision to continue to work in (or, in Daly's term, on the 'Boundary' of) the academy. In common with other academic feminist theologians, Daly has always chosen to work from within the parameters of the collegiate or university systems of higher education. She remains on the faculty of the theology department at Boston College in Boston, Massachusetts where she has taught since the late sixties. Her relationship with the authorities at Boston College has always been strained. She now lectures to groups of female students only. No men are allowed in her classroom, though she tutors male students individually as and when required. Clearly Daly is suspicious of the social privilege accorded to the academy and its epistemological claims (which, like many other feminists, she thinks have reflected masculine values and experience rather than that of 'humanity' in general) and its underlying idealisation of instrumental rationality and objectivity. Hence her often fierce invective against the values of 'patriarchal scholarship'![15] Such suspicions notwithstanding, however, the university remains, for Daly, a legitimate site for her own feminist struggle. Like Adrienne Rich, she thinks that feminists can use the university and its resources as a site for conducting feminist research whose influence will permeate far beyond the bounds of the academy.[16] In higher education, Daly writes: 'there is still a struggle for the life of the mind. These institutions possess important re-sources for the stimulation of such life. Therefore, they remain an essential arena - a battleground, in fact - of the struggle for intellectual/e-motional autonomy that is feminist separation from the State of Separation'.[17] Moreover, since one of the problems that feminists encounter is that of having to perpetually 're-invent the wheel' with regard to feminist constructs and consciousness, feminist participation in the academy remains important as a way of transmitting knowledge and values from one generation of women to the next.

This is not to say that Daly's interaction with male-stream theory is wholly unproblematic. Daly tends to use 'canonical' authors within different fields - thinkers such as Berger in sociology, and Aquinas in theology - to 'think against' , such that she both draws sustenance from them whilst yet using them in order to think her *own* thoughts. With regard to this practice she comments:

Ark paperbacks, 1987; first published in London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952) p.48-49.

15 Attacks upon 'patriarchal scholarship' and its erasure of women permeate Daly's writings. See, for example, Gyn/Ecology pp.143-52, 170-77, 203-22, 288-92, 306-12. For the definition of 'academentia' see the Wickedary p.184.

16 Rich, Adrienne 'Towards a Woman-Centred University' inOn Lies, Secrets, Silence: Selected prose 1966-78 (London: Virago, 1980) pps.125-55

17 Pure Lust p. 373.

> To say that concepts are derivative from the Christian tradition (or from Marxian theory, or from Aristotelian philosophy, or from Freudian theory, or from American culture) says little about the value of the concepts. To deny the existence of sources would be to deny the reality of process and of causality ... I think it is important to be constantly aware that it matters more where we are going than where we started from.[18]

This attitude explains Daly's failure sometimes to acknowledge thinkers whose insights she tears from their original philosophical contexts in order to use them as a springboard for her own 'ludic cerebration'. Daly's reticence to own the contingency of her own ideas upon the efforts of others is a trait that we shall encounter on a number of occasions. It possesses great rhetorical merit in that it helps to create the impression of Daly's theoretical originality and novelty. This impression is compounded by the way that she often sets up a particular thinker as a 'straw man', simplifying their views for the purpose of 'rhetorical disembowelment'.[19] This strain in Daly's rhetoric seems to preclude any criticism of her work. She herself apears to be highly sensitive to criticism. As Meaghan Morris has noted, Daly wants to run the game *her* way: either one has 'ears to hear' her message (that is, one agrees with her and is for her) or one is deaf to the message (that is, one disagrees with her and is thereby against her). Her rhetorical strategy thus involves a combination of recognition and distancing and each, in its own way, functions so as to assert her own eminence: her explanations are billed as corrections of error, or as restorations of partial truth.

In piercing the illusion of novelty we were enabled to rectify a number of misconceptions about Daly's writings and clarify some of its more abstruse features. I hope to have shown however that an appreciative attitude towards Daly's legacy need not negate the necessity for honest criticism of her work where it should prove necessary, that is, where her thought shows inconsistencies, where it is unnecessarily opaque or politically divisive. This is important, for only by recognising the limitations and historicity of her writing will we then be able to bestow upon her work its proper theoretical dignity. Only thus will Daly be able to remain present in a robust feminist tradition and culture. As I have shown throughout my thesis Daly often wrenches concepts out of the discursive contexts which confer intelligibility upon them, thereby abandoning the cultural, philosophical background against which the ideas were originally understood. The meanings she then assigns to the concepts she employs are often highly individual, and often they appear somewhat arbitrary. This approach immediately invites critical response from supporters of these thinkers who may feel that Daly does violence to their work by integrating their thought into a theoretical formation that they would all undoubtedly have found quite alien. This is undoubtedly one of the hazards of Daly's

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18 Daly 'A Short Essay on Hearing and the qualitative Leap of Radical Feminism' Horizons 2 (1975) pp.122-23.

19 See for example her treatment of Peter Berger in Beyond God the Father pp.135-136.

approach. In one respect then the difficulty in dealing with Daly's thought is not so much in tracing its sources, but in identifying a consistency of structure. She draws on many diverse thinkers and attempts to pull them all together in her own unique act of feminist synthesis. Whilst it is important that her integrative intentions are given due attention, it is sometimes difficult to see how their insights, concepts and ideas can gel together or be integrated. Adherents to Thomism or any of the other systematic frameworks with which she engages may well consider that Daly would benefit from a more faithful rendering of systems. That her meaning is often hard to pin down is due, in no small part, to the terminological obscurity and conceptual diffuseness that follows her 'infidelity' with regard to her sources.

Glancing through the secondary literature on Daly's work, or discussing her claims with other feminists, it becomes apparent that it is almost impossible to remain neutral as to what Daly is saying. I think of one review critic who admits to throwing Gyn/Ecology across the room in fury before later picking it up to read again. My own experience of the sometimes hostile reception given to Daly's work shows me that what she has to say regarding male-female relationships and established religion is deeply threatening to non-feminists and some Christian feminist students. No other writer who is classified as a feminist theologian seems to evoke such reactions. Daly is undoubtedly both politically outspoken and uncompromising. She appears to be highly sensitive to criticism and this can encourage a protective and defensive attitude on the part of her supporters. Invariably one encounters Daly in either of these contexts as either a straw figure or else an 'idol without feet of clay'. I think one must avoid both of these traps. It is frankly admitted that the standpoint of the thesis has been broadly in sympathy with Daly's agenda, goals and methods.A fundamental conviction underlying Daly's radical feminist ethics is that it possible for women to challenge the value-matrix of the system of sexual domination, and to affirm a different set of values through the exercise of choice. It is possible to transform consciousness, it is possible to create a revolution in the way in which we see and relate with ourselves, with each other and with the stunning array of life-forms that participate in the miracle of God's continuing creation.As a feminist I remain committed to this assumption. Moreover, my own feminist consciousness has developed, in large measure, out of my own dialogue with her work. This process - rapturous, traumatic and always challenging - was stirred into life by reading Beyond God the Father and Gyn/Ecology and later intensified by meeting her at her home in Boston, Massachusetts.

It is also hoped that this project in clarifying some of the intellectual roots of her position has helped to dipel certain familiar (if not tired) criticisms. As I have shown, since the publication of Gyn/Ecology Daly has been the target of allegations centring around issues such as

'essentialism';[20] racism[21] and classism.[22] I believe the charge that Daly has 'fallen' into 'politically incorrect' stances on these questions to be both ill-founded and politically negative.[23] However, my attention has focused neither upon defence nor counter-polemic. I do not suggest that her work possesses transglobal relevance. Clearly her philosophy is neither attractive nor, it may now appear, appropriate to the 'reformist', ethnic and/or racial agendas of many feminist theologians. Black women in particular have already documented the limitations of Daly's work for their struggle. I have not sought, therefore, to engage in a whitewash of Daly in the face of her many critics. I have no wish to 'canonise' Daly, to create 'Dalyian' theology as though her work could become a standard for evaluating everyone else's. Nor do I overlook the strangeness of some of her insights for traditional theologians and philosophers. Feminist theology is fast becoming a more mature theoretical corpus, able to withstand and benefit from criticism. It may be that in order for her contribution to be properly received by the feminist community the kind of critique that she herself performs on texts will have to be performed on her own writings. Indeed, such a process has already begun. With Martin Heidegger we may say that a certain 'destruction' is necessary in order for the critical 'retrieval' or 're-appropriation' of Daly's work for feminist theology to take place.

But, then, is there no theory that is beyond improvement? As Dale Spender has noted: 'Clearly, [Daly's] emphasis is on 'cerebration', and not on particular campaigns'[24] Criticism that focuses upon the theological lacunae in Daly's approach, with what she does not say or address (as I have done) may therefore miss the point somewhat. Spender continues: '...the issue with Mary Daly's work is not where it fails to go, but how far it does go, for while much will remain unrevealed to one journeyer, that it is possible to journey is the crux of her contribution'.[25] I wish to echo this statement: it is what she does say and do that is surely of chief importance in any assessment of her significance. Daly herself freely admits that her writings are 'not the Last Word'.[26] There is no 'happy closure' at the end of her account; indeed, there is no 'end', as such, in sight. The point is, as Daly herself would doubtless acknowledge, not to settle down comfortably with her

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20 See for example Linda Alcoff 'Cultural Feminism Versus post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory' in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 1988 vol 13, no.3. pp.405-436.

21 See for example Audre Lorde 'An Open Letter to Mary Daly' in Sister, Outsider (N.Y.: Crossing Press, 1984).

22 See for example Lynn Segal, op. Cit; or Susan B. J. Thistlethwaite, op. cit.

23 For a radical feminist analysis of uses and abuses of the rhetoric of 'poliical corrrectness' see Marilyn Frye 'Getting it Right' in Willful Virgin: Essays in Feminist Theory 1976-1992 (Freedom, CA.: The Crossing Press, 1992) pp.13-27.

24 Spender Man-Made Language p.208.

25 Ibid., p.204.

26 Gyn/Ecology pps. xxxi, xlii, 22.

work, but to work through it in order to move beyond it. One cannot, I think, be a disciple of Mary Daly nor would she wish any. One can, however, benefit from her intuitions and seek to apply them to the art of living in the spirit of Daly herself, reflecting all the while upon our own efforts to live and to live in the light of our reflections. This is what I have striven to do.

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